

Hafa Adai!

MVA: We still have a long road ahead of us. **PAGE 3**

A&E contracts OK'd for Oleai complex, cultural center. **PAGE 6**

\$1

# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 54

www.saipantribune.com

FRIDAY MARCH 17, 2023

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

## Palacios: CNMI to pivot from its reliance on China market

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**G**ov. Arnold Palacios has expressed his intent to pivot the CNMI away from its reliance on the Chinese tourism market, in a nod to the increasing geopolitical tension between the United States and China.

See **MARKET** on Page 4

## 28 cops accused of illegal OTs

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Public Safety has launched an investigation into 28 officers

See **COPS** on Page 4



## Southern Airways to pursue legal action vs Torres admin if bank account has no funds

» **Southern Airways CEO seeks OAG's criminal probe if it is verified that account for project has no funds**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Southern Airways chair and chief executive officer Stan Little has informed Gov. Arnold I. Palacios that they would pursue legal action against the Torres administra-

See **AIRWAYS** on Page 4

## CJMT MEETING

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, center, Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, left, and other administration representatives met last week with Maj. General Mark A. Hashimoto of the U.S. Marine Forces Pacific and other senior military officials to obtain an initial update on where the Marines' are in the planning process for adjustments to the CNMI Joint Military Training proposal. The briefing covered what has been accomplished through technical working group meetings and proposed next steps in environmental planning.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

## 'CNMI can convince DC to reconsider touchback'

» **Villagomez agrees with need to amend NMI US Workforce Act, applauds Kilili's bill for 'touchback' delay**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) believes

that the CNMI can convince Washington, D.C. to reconsider the "touchback provision" of the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, Public Law 115-218, provided that the Common-

See **TOUCHBACK** on Page 4

## INSIDE



## SUPPLEMENT

This edition comes with a supplement that celebrates the 30th anniversary of McDonald's Saipan.

**PAGE 13**



## BUSINESS

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce opposes increased fees for certain immigration requests.

**PAGE 25**



## LIFE & STYLE

James Gunn is directing a Superman film, "Superman: Legacy," which Gunn also wrote.

**PAGE 31**



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



**GOT A NEWS TIP?**

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com



a boutique for  
**Tween girls**  
ages 8-12

Dresses, Tees,  
skirts, jeans, shorts,  
and Accessories!

Now Available Communion  
Dresses & Accessories



**Girl Talk**

FISG Bldg., Micro Beach Road, next to Poki Yaki  
Mon-Fri: 11am to 5pm | Sat: 10am to 5pm.  
Closed on Sunday  
TEL. 233-8050

Like us on Facebook

**Toys & Clothes**  
for children  
ages 0 to 10



**LOLLIPOPS**

BEACH RD., GARAPAN  
Monday - Saturday: 9am - 6pm  
Sunday: 10am - 4pm  
TEL. 234-8040

Like us on Facebook

# Local

## NMC to offer nursing ass't training program

Northern Marianas College's Nursing Program is offering a comprehensive 10-week Nursing Assistant Program this summer, providing students with the training and certification needed to begin their careers as Certified Nursing Assistants. With a focus on practical skills and real-world experience, this program is designed for anyone interested in working in the healthcare industry and helping others in need.

The program will be held from May 31 to Aug. 4, and will prepare entry-level nursing assistants to provide basic nursing care to the elderly, ill, and persons with disabilities in a variety of settings such as long-term care, hospitals, clinics, schools, and home health.

The Nursing Assistant Program is open to all students and individuals interested in starting a career as a nursing assistant. Upon completion of the course, participants will receive a certificate of completion and be eligible to take the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program Competency Examination administered by the NMI Board of Nursing.

Passing the NNAAP exam will enable participants to become licensed as a Certified Nursing Assistant, be placed on the NMI Board of Nursing Registry for nursing assistants, and practice as a CNA in the CNMI, U.S. territories or U.S. mainland.

Interested individuals can attend an info session on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, from 5pm to 7pm at the NMC Saipan Campus in Room V-109 to learn more about the Nursing Assistant Program, including admission guidelines, applicable fees, and available financial assistance. Attendees of the info session will also have their NMC admissions application and placement test fees waived, which is a savings of \$75.

To apply for the Nursing Assistant Program, interested applicants must visit the NMC website at [www.marianas.edu/nursing](http://www.marianas.edu/nursing) admissions and submit an application with the required documents such as official high school or equivalent transcript, health evaluation form, valid photo identification, and a copy of their diploma. High school students who are inter-

ested must meet the criteria of NMC's Early Admissions Program to enroll, which includes an official transcript, health evaluation, valid photo identification, and a GPA of 3.0 or a recommendation letter from a school counselor.

All applicants must meet the English placement of EN095 (Integrated Reading and Writing II) and Math placement of MA091 (Beginning Algebra). Students who need to take the placement tests must contact Maia Pangelinan at the NMC Testing Center at 670-237-6774 to schedule their placement tests before March 31, 2023.

For more information on tuition and other applicable fees, interested individuals can visit [www.marianas.edu/nursing](http://www.marianas.edu/nursing) and refer to Nursing Assistant Program Admissions Guidelines and Cost Breakdown. They can also contact Andrew Mendiola at (670) 237-6744 or email at [andrew.mendiola@marianas.edu](mailto:andrew.mendiola@marianas.edu) for assistance.

NMC would like to extend its gratitude to its major partners who continue to support this program and its students

See NMC on Page 4

**NISSAN** **2022 FRONTIER** **CLEARANCE** NISSAN INTELLIGENT MOBILITY

Starting at  
**\$236\***  
per paycheck\*

and receive up to  
**\$1000**  
JCT/Superstore  
Gift Certificate\*



BEST IN-CLASS HORSEPOWER    FREE TINT & ZIEBART UNDERCOATING    ONE YEAR FREE SERVICE

**Visit us at [www.joetenmotors.com](http://www.joetenmotors.com) • Tel. (670) 234-5562**

SHOWROOM HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 8AM - 5PM • SATURDAY 8AM - 12PM  
Vehicle may not be exactly as shown • Some conditions apply • While Supplies last.

**Joeten Motors**  
POWERED BY YOU  
Like us on Facebook

\*2022 Nissan Frontier S Crew Cab 2wd \$39,595 - 20% down at 4.59% APR for 72 months at 26 payments per year, OAC Deferred financing \$36,866.16  
\*Offer valid from March 20, to April 30, 2023 or while supplies last.



# MVA: We still have a long road ahead of us

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Although the CNMI's tourism industry is now on the road to recovery, there is still a long journey ahead, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

tors Authority.

According to acting MVA chair Gloria Cavanagh, the recovery of the CNMI's tourism industry has been slow but steady. And although recovery continues, it seems as though the road remains long, especially now that geopolitical

issues continue to hinder the return of the Chinese market, one of the CNMI largest tourism markets.

"In terms of supporting our sole economic driver and recovering our tourism econ-

omy, investing and attracting more visitors to our destination remains MVA's top priority and the best return on our investment. At this time, total arrivals to the Marianas are around 47% year-to-date compared to fiscal year 2019 before COVID. We anticipate a recovery of 77% of all air seats from Korea by the end of this fiscal year compared to pre-COVID. Japan is also making a slow but steady recovery," she said.

"But at this time, China, which is our second biggest

source market before COVID, is not available to us due to geopolitical issues. In short, we still have a long recovery process ahead of us. And with [American Rescue Plan Acts] funding depleted, we are having to fight our competitors and an unfavorable currency exchange for every single visitor arrival," Cavanagh added.

For these reasons, Cavanagh said MVA is looking at asking the Legislature to re-implement Public Law 18-1, which appropriates a large portion of the CNMI's Hotel

Occupancy Tax to MVA.

"Regarding next year's budget, our board will be requesting the re-implementation of Public Law 18-1, which was suspended due to COVID. This law is the funding source for MVA, providing a majority of the Hotel Occupancy Tax for our personnel and operations," she said. "With ARPA depleted, we will be respectfully requesting that this law be restored so MVA can continue our work of tourism recovery and development."

## SCC webinar seeks to empower women in the workplace

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is hosting its first quarter professional development training webinar, "Women in Business: How Company Leaders Can Support Women in the Workplace," on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, from 10am to 11:30am via Google Meet. Meeting links will be sent out a day before the webinar via email.

Key concepts from this professional development training are:

- Women in the Workplace: Presentation Overview, Data & Statistics

- Workforce Development: Education & Skills Training Opportunities, Mentorships

- Workplace Culture: Policies & Practices, Pay Equity, Family & Work-Life Balance

- Entrepreneurial Success: Leadership Opportunities, Local/Small Business Support - Collective Power

Participant takeaways include:

- New strategies to implement in how they promote and encourage professional and workforce development

- Policies and practices to consider integrating company-wide

- Resources for further education and insights on how company leaders can empower women in the workplace and in their communities

The training webinar will be conducted by:

- MPOWERD Solutions' Demitrah Rasmussen, MNM, CNP, who has five-plus years of youth, volunteer, and corporate relations experience in the nonprofit sector and is a Master of Nonprofit Management, and Certified Nonprofit Professional; and

- Mona Manglona Jacobs, MSW, NCRI, who has five-plus years of executive-level nonprofit leadership and is a Master of Social Work and Nationally Certified Results-Oriented Management & Accountability Implementer.

SCC is inviting all of its members and the public to register for this professional development training webinar.

To register and for more information, visit <https://forms.gle/JpEECdDHuCjTQdBu5>, call (670) 234-7150, or email [contactus@saipanchamber.org](mailto:contactus@saipanchamber.org). (SCC)

### ARMATECH



Elevator,  
Escalator, Lift  
Installer and  
Repairer

Tel: (670) 234-8895 | Email: [armatech.saipan@gmail.com](mailto:armatech.saipan@gmail.com)  
Mobile: (670) 287-5525 / (670) 783-8895

Accident brings  
**Tears**

Safety brings  
**Cheers**

a friendly reminder from

**WUSHIN**

Since 1983 Committed to Safety Excellence

For your LPGas needs, please call 322-7415 or 322-8733  
Open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday | 8:00am – 2:00pm Saturday

**HANA**  
HEALTH MASSAGE

**SERVICES OFFERED**

- Body (Oil) Massage ■ Foot Massage ■ Cupping Therapy ■ Sauna  
(with medicine) (Suction cup massage for back pain) (\$25 for 2 person)
- NEW! Table Shower and Body Scrub Spa - Soon in San Antonio Location

**SPECIAL PROMO**  
■ 90 minutes Body (Oil) Massage **\$30**

**Locations:** ■ MSV Building, Chalan Kanoa across Moonlight  
■ NEW location → San Antonio, across Afetna Super Market

**10:00AM TO 12:00AM • Call HANA: 789-7778**  
**WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS**

The time is now.

Tackle your debt, travel the world, or start that home project.

In celebration of our Founder's Day, take advantage of this special personal loan\* rate and make those daydreams a reality.

**Founder's Day Loan Special**

AS LOW AS

**6.51%**

APR\*\*

UP TO \$50,000  
NO PAYMENT FOR 90 DAYS

Apply today at [bankofguam.com](http://bankofguam.com).  
Promo Period: March 13 - March 31, 2023\*\*\*

**Bank of Guam**  
Member FDIC

\*Subject to Bank of Guam lending criteria. Terms and conditions apply. \*\*Annual Percentage Rate. \*\*\*Promotional rate offered for a limited time from March 13 through close of business day March 31, 2023.



## SCC: Touchback delay is best option

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce believes that a bill to delay the implementation of the “touchback rule” by three years is the best option for the CNMI right now, considering the current climate in the U.S. Congress.

In a news release yesterday, the SCC said it is extremely appreciative of Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan’s (D-MP) introduction of H.R. 1420.

SCC board director Alex Sablan said that, based on the current climate in Congress, H.R. 1420 is the best option and has the greatest success of passage through both houses of Congress.

“We’re hopeful that both Houses see that this is yet another piece of legislation that will help provide workforce continuity in our economy. We view this bill as ensuring

commerce and our economy continue to grow and support the citizens of the CNMI as we all continue to recover from more than three years of economic downturn due to pandemic related impacts,” he said.

“We’re hopeful we can make our case with Congress and assist in any way possible [Delegate] Gregorio Kilili Sablan in its successful passage,” he added.

He said H.R. 1420 will provide CNMI employers, employees, and

the CNMI economy “the much needed reprieve it requires to steadily grow as tourism rebounds and returns to pre-pandemic numbers and Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios and Lt. Gov. [David M.] Apatang work toward adding a proverbial second leg in our economic stool with the military buildup in the region and the CNMI.

The “touchback rule,” which will take effect on Sept. 30, 2023, requires select foreign workers holding CW visas in the CNMI to exit the CNMI

before employers could apply to have their work contracts renewed. H.R. 1420 seeks to delay the implementation of this rule by three years.

Right now, the U.S. House of representatives is dominated by the Republican Party, which is usually tough on immigration-related matters. This is presumably what the SCC refers to as the “current climate” in Congress. The U.S. Senate is controlled by the Democratic Party. **(PR/ Saipan Tribune)**

## AIRWAYS

From Page 1

tion if Palacios will be able to verify that the account relating to their \$8-million contract with the CNMI government has no funds.

Little pointed out in his letter to Palacios dated March 1, 2023, that their contract even went on to specify in which bank and in what account the

funds for the project were already appropriated and held.

These came to light last Wednesday at a public hearing conducted by the Senate Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications Committee to address problems related to the CNMI’s interisland travel.

Southern Airways, largest commuter airline in the United States, is a partner of Marianas Southern Airways, which was one of the

airline providers that appeared at Wednesday’s hearing, when MSA vice president William Giles read a portion of Little’s letter before the committee.

In the letter, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune*, Little suggested to Palacios to have a member of his staff verify the amounts in a certain account number. Should there be no funds in that specific account, Little requested

the governor to let them know as that would be a material misrepresentation of the contract and that they would pursue legal action against the Torres administration.

He further stated that should there no funds in this account, he hopes that Palacios would direct Attorney General Edward Manibusan to conduct a criminal investigation.

Palacios terminated the government’s \$8 million contract with MSA last Feb. 23, citing a lack of funding. Manibusan had approved that contract.

In response to a question by Sen-

ate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) if he could share the bank’s name in that account, MSA vice president Giles said “actually no” as this was Little’s request letter to Palacios.

Giles said that, based on what is in the contract, it says the funds are certified and they’re certified to be in this account. “That’s what he (Little) was referring to,” Giles said.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## TOUCHBACK

From Page 1

wealth also show that it is sincere in increasing the rate of qualified workforce participation through workforce training, labor enforcement and placements.

House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) agrees with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios’ position that the U.S. Workforce Act of 2018, which governs the administration of CW program, needs to be amended. He also applauds the efforts of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) in filing a bill that delays the “touchback provision” by three years.

In his testimony before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on the “State of the U.S. Territories” last month, Palacios noted that processing times for CW-1 permits are so delayed that employers wait months after the petition start date to receive the necessary approvals to secure entry of the CW-1 permit holders to the CNMI.

As a result, Palacios said, because of the “touchback rule,” a large population of workers will be required to depart all at the same time without a

clear timeline for their return, and at a time when businesses are attempting to regain normalcy in operations.

Sablan said the “touchback provision” was problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic, when air flights were interrupted and costly, and home country ingress (entry) requirements made it difficult for workers to return.

DeLeon Guerrero said it is quite obvious that there are millions of dollars of federal funds for CNMI construction projects to break ground. Yet, she said, the CNMI is lacking in sufficient skilled workers to work these projects, while also at the same time there are citizens who need jobs.

The Senate president said it is good that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reconsidered its initial policy on Commonwealth-Only Transitional Workers (CW-1) issued prior to June 18, 2020 as now only CW-1s issued on or after June 18, 2020, are the ones applicable to with this new policy.

“We must strike a balance by providing employment opportunities to local qualified residents in industry/sectors of the economy where jobs creation is most notable, example the construction industry where the touchback provision will not be in

the interest of the CNMI because projects must continue,” DeLeon Guerrero said.

At the end of the day, Villagomez said, it’s the CNMI’s federal partners that control immigration here and the process in which to carry out that immigration policy.

Villagomez said even if the “touchback provision” is delayed just for three years, it’s almost like an impediment to the CNMI’s economy and in providing the goods and services to customers, whether they are local customers or visitors.

The speaker also noted that there are a lot of ongoing construction projects happening now in the CNMI.

Villagomez said the CNMI is trying to bring back the tourism industry on its feet and the services that the hotels provide might be compromised. Even if the delay is temporary, what if the CNMI sees a surge of visitors coming around that time when a good number of key staff at hotels or service industries have to go through this “touchback” requirement?

Villagomez said even if the “touchback” requirement is delayed temporarily as Sablan sought in his legislation, the CNMI could see a difference in the effect it might have on the economy.

five-and-a-half months of regular hours, were requested for 40 officers who were allegedly part of former DPS commissioner Robert Guerrero’s “inner circle.”

The transition report said there is reason to believe that possible fraud and theft of government time was committed.

“There is evidence of possible fraud/theft of government time in terms of excessive OT within the same group of officers every pay period. OT per officer would run anywhere from 50 hours to 145 hours. First responders that are lower ranking officers are only allowed 30-40 hours OT maximum, whereas higher ranking officers were allowed to accrue OT past 40 hours, usually amounting to 60 or more each pay period, with one officer clocking in over 200 hours of overtime in one single pay period,” the transition report states.

ing investigation.

Last year, the transition team assigned to DPS found that the department requested approval for over 11,000 hours of overtime—roughly one year and a half’s worth of regular work hours—in just one pay period in December.

More specifically, the transition report noted a whopping 11,127.25 overtime hours were requested for the pay period from Dec. 4, 2022, to Dec. 17, 2022.

In addition, the transition team also stated that upon review of timesheets and OT requests from January 2022 to January 2023, it found that DPS has been paying out excessive OT accruals for the same group of officers, some higher-ranking officers and certain lower ranking ones as well—specific to certain sections.

The transition team found that, of the over 11,000 hours in overtime, about 4,000 OT hours, roughly about

## MARKET

From Page 1

In a letter to Adm. John Aquillino, commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Palacios said his administration is committed to advancing U.S. national interests in the Pacific region, which includes pivoting away from the CNMI’s reliance on its Chinese tourism market.

“My administration is very much committed to the U.S. national interests in our region and will do what we can to advance these interests as geopolitical tensions continue to heighten. Part of this commitment includes the CNMI’s pivot away from its reliance on the Chinese tourism market, which comprised more than 50% of our tourism base (about 200,000 visitors pre-pandemic),” he said.

In place of the Chinese market, Palacios says his administration is working on strengthening and further developing the tourism pipelines from American allies like Japan and South Korea.

“This will take time. The loss of the Chinese market has had considerably adverse economic and financial impact on the Commonwealth. This loss, which represents a sizable portion of our tourism revenue, contributes to vulnerable economic conditions that in the past have been exploited by the Chinese Communist Party to the detriment of the United States’ interest in the region,” said Palacios.

Because of the anticipated loss in revenue, Palacios is seeking the Indo-Pacific Command’s help in advocating for additional support in the form of funding to stabilize the

CNMI community as it commits to turning away from one of its biggest tourism markets.

“Because the CNMI’s economic stability and sustainability is directly tied to the strategic posture and military might of the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region, we are formally seeking your advocacy for additional funding support to stabilize our economy as you testify before the U.S. Congress about the [Department of Defense]’s budget. Specifically, we request for your support in seeking direct aid to replace the economic loss that we have experienced as a result of the CNMI’s pivot away from China,” he said.

Right now, the CNMI’s tourism sector is dominated by Korea, China, and Japan, with just a sprinkling from other destinations. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a massive drop in visitors from these markets. It has only been lately that both the Korean and Japanese markets have started trickling back in.

Recently, the United States lifted the testing requirement for visitors from China, which in turn has increased prospects for the CNMI’s tourism industry with its largest market, China, showing an interest in returning to the CNMI sometime in May.

As of last week, Commonwealth Port Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said that CPA has already received inquiries from Chinese airlines interested in returning to Saipan.

“Yes, we have received inquiry from the China market. Beijing Capital has [already] reached out to CPA expressing an interest to resume services sometime in May,” she said.

tion, and NMI Board of Nursing.

Registration for the course opens on March 31, 2023, via NMC’s ProaPortal. Seating is limited to 20 students and is on a first-come-first-serve basis. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply early to secure their seat in the Nursing Assistant Program. **(NMC)**

## COPS

From Page 1

who are being accused of incurring illegal overtime.

DPS placed yesterday the 28 police officers on administrative duty for allegedly unjustified overtime hours.

According to acting DPS commissioner Clement Bermudes, DPS is investigating this matter as a criminal case.

“The complaints of illegal and unjustified overtime involving several police officers will be taken seriously. Pending the results of the investigation, these police officers will be held accountable for their actions. As sworn officers, we will always maintain the highest ethical standards, upholding the laws of our Commonwealth,” said Bermudes.

He assures that more information will be released pending the ongoing

## NMC

From Page 2

each year, including CNMI Area Health Education Center, CNMI Department of Labor Workforce Investment Agency, Tinian Mayor’s Office, Commonwealth Healthcare Corpora-



<b>ST. PATRICK'S ACCESSORIES</b>  <b>35% off</b>	<b>BICYCLES &amp; TRICYCLES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>BOYS TEE SHIRTS &amp; SHORTS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>BATHROOM CURTAINS &amp; RUGS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	
<b>ELECTRONICS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>GIRLS DRESSES &amp; BLOUSES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>HANDBAGS &amp; WALLETS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>PLASTIC HOUSEWARES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>LADIES DRESSES, BLOUSES &amp; SHORTS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>MENS TEE SHIRTS &amp; SHORTS</b>  <b>25% off</b>
<b>PARTY SUPPLIES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>PICTURE FRAMES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>SHEETS &amp; BLANKETS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>SCHOOL SUPPLIES</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>SHOES &amp; SANDALS</b>  <b>25% off</b>	<b>TOYS</b>  <b>25% off</b>



# JOETEN 3-DAY ST. PATRICK'S DAY WEEKEND SALE

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, MARCH 17 - 19, 2023

<b>US CHICKEN LEG QUARTERS 20 LBS</b>  <b>\$14<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>US CHOICE BEEF SHORT RIBS THIN SLICE</b>  <b>\$6<sup>69</sup> /lb.</b>	<b>SHRIMP HEADLESS SKIN-ON 31-35ct 1.5 LBS</b>  <b>\$9<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>CHUCKWAGON HOTDOGS 16oz</b>  <b>\$1<sup>49</sup></b>	<b>SAPPORO ICHIBAN ORIGINAL RAMEN 24/3.5oz</b>  <b>\$13<sup>99</sup> /cs.</b>
<b>PALM GARLIC CORNED BEEF 11.5oz</b>  <b>\$4<sup>50</sup> ea.</b>	<b>ACE OF DIAMONDS TUNA 7oz</b>  <b>\$1<sup>95</sup> ea.</b>	<b>PURISS WATER 20/350ml</b>  <b>\$5<sup>00</sup> /cs.</b>	<b>WINE GANG AUSTRALIAN WINE 750ml</b>  <b>\$7<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>JOETEN BUTANE GAS 4pk</b>  <b>\$25<sup>99</sup> /cs.</b>

## GROCERY/MARKET ITEMS

<b>HEFTY FOAM PLATE 8 7/8" FT 100ct</b>  <b>\$4<sup>79</sup></b>	<b>CODI DECO TOILET TISSUE 30rolls</b>  <b>\$13<sup>75</sup></b>	<b>JELLO GELATIN LIME 3oz</b>  <b>\$1<sup>29</sup></b>	<b>MCCORMICK FOOD COLOR GREEN 1z</b>  <b>\$3<sup>69</sup></b>	<b>CHABAA COCONUT WATER 1LITER</b>  <b>3 for \$6<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>U.S. EGGS X-LARGE WH 1DZ</b>  <b>\$4<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>PHIL BANANA /LB</b>  <b>99¢</b>	<b>FROZEN SUMAN CASSAVA</b>  <b>2 for \$2<sup>99</sup></b>
<b>SWEET H GRANOLA MAPLE PECAN 20.5z</b>  <b>\$4<sup>99</sup> ea.</b>	<b>ASSORTED FUN PACK CHOCOLATES</b>  <b>\$6<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>US CHOICE RIBEYE STEAK</b>  <b>\$20<sup>69</sup> /lb.</b>	<b>CHICKEN LIVER CUP 15z</b>  <b>\$2<sup>49</sup></b>	<b>SQUID WHOLE 3# BOX</b>  <b>\$10<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>MILKFISH BELLY 350-400g</b>  <b>\$5<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>NZ FROZEN SALMON FILLET S-ON B/O /LB</b>  <b>\$13<sup>75</sup></b>	<b>U.S. BEEF OXTAILS SLICED</b>  <b>\$7<sup>39</sup> /lb.</b>

**Joeten Shopping Center**

**DISCLAIMER:**

Although Joeten strives to ensure that all pricing information on this ad is accurate, occasionally an error may occur and goods may be mispriced. We reserve the right to correct all typographical and pictorial errors.

P.O. Box 500137 Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel. 234-6446/48 • Fax. 234-5876  
Visit our 4-Branches: Joeten Susupe, Garapan, Dandan and Kagman



WE WELCOME FOOD STAMPS.  
WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES





Never satisfied until you are

## NEW ARRIVAL

G24 & G26 G.I. ROOFING TIN  
SECURITY DOOR, G.I. PIPES,  
G.I. SQUARE TUBE,  
G.I. C CHANNEL & Z CHANNEL,  
2x4 RECTANGULAR TUBE,  
SHORING JACK, OFFICE TABLE  
AND CHAIR, US MADE WATER  
HEATER, TEMPERED GLASS  
ALUMINUM SLIDING WINDOW.

## NEW ARRIVAL Furniture



*Make a Difference  
for Your House!*



## NEW ARRIVALS! CARPOLY PAINT

It's the suitable paint for the island climate.  
Make your paint last for a long time!



1 FREE T-shirt with one time  
purchase of two buckets of  
**CARPOLY**  
Professional Paint Solution Provider  
**First Come First Served,  
While Stocks Last**

## LED LIGHTS

- Less money, 50% energy saving!
- More stable, bright, and fashionable!
- More longer and environmental protection!

**Your Smart Choice!**

**G60 Rebar is Available Now!**

**CHEAPEST DEALER OF MAJOR  
CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL ON ISLAND!**

P.O. BOX 501640, SAIPAN, MP 96950  
TEL: (670) 288-2288/2289/6688  
FAX: 288-4488  
E-mail: guangdong\_hardware@163.com

**BUSINESS HOURS:**  
**Monday to Saturday**  
**8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**



# A&E contracts OK'd for Oleai complex, cultural center

The CNMI Office of Planning and Development issued last March 2 and 7, 2023, respectively, the notices to proceed on the architecture and engineering design contracts for the Oleai

Sports Complex and Cultural Events Center Facilities Development Projects.

These projects are two of the CNMI's premier socio-economic development priority projects funded by the

## ARTICLE OF DISSOLUTION OF TENGFEI INVESTMENT CORP

Tengfei Investment Corp, a CNMI Company/ Corporation.  
Does Hereby Certify Tengfei Investment Corp Corporation

First: That dissolution was authorized by the company on September 30, 2022.

Second: That dissolution has been authorized in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 14, Subchapter A, Section 14.02 of the CNMI Corporation regulations.

Third: That process maybe serve against the corporation at the following address:  
P.O. Box 8107 SVRB Saipan MP 96950.

Fourth: That a resolution proposing dissolution has been adopted and approved by the majority of the shareholders.

Fifth: That number votes can be cast and two votes were cast in favor of this dissolution.

In Witness Whereof, Said, Tengfei Investment Corp, has caused this article of dissolution to be signed by following Board of Directors at this 30th day of September, 2022.

Approved By:

/s/ Xiumei Shi  
(President/ Vice-President Signature)

/s/ Bohu Li  
(Secretary Signature)



## COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY(CPA) CNMI GOVERNMENT

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962  
Website: www.cnmiports.com



## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit bid proposals and their qualifications for the PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, Project No. CPA-SS-001-17, for the island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, CPA-SS-001-17" and submitted no later than **2:00 P.M. (CHST), THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing.

The Project, in general, consists of Berth 103 Cavity Repairs including all associated work, all in accordance with the Plans and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans, specifications and the bid schedule, may be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon the payment of **TWO HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS (\$200.00)** for each set of plans and documents in electronic form (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable unless this notice to bidders is cancelled. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order, made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bidders should notify CPA's point of contact mentioned below immediately if there are issues retrieving the files on the DVD and are to verify all information using the specification table of contents and the index of drawings.

A pre-bid conference will be held at CPA's Capt. George Fleming Memorial Building Conference Room at the Port of Saipan, located in Lower Base on the island of Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), at **10:00 A.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2023**, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. Attendance is not mandatory. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing.

Questions should be submitted in writing to the CPA Executive Director's Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or emailed to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at [wprater@cnmiports.com](mailto:wprater@cnmiports.com) at least ten (10) days prior to the bid opening date; with the exception of extension requests which have no deadline. Responses to all questions and requests for information will be provided to all bidders who purchased a DVD and attended the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall use the bid schedule form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority on the DVD. Each bidder must also supply all supplemental information required in the specifications.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be **FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY (420) calendar days**. Liquidated damages in the amount of **FIVE HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS PER CALENDAR DAY (\$500.00)** shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-enter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed or CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-26 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §5 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all local and Federal requirements under this procurement.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO  
Executive Director

Date: February 8, 2023

### CNMI OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A top-down concept of the Oleai Cultural Events Center, which will be across the street from the renovated and revitalized Oleai Sports Complex.

U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Through the Oleai Sports Complex Project, the goal is to develop a state-of-the-art sports complex that will make the CNMI a prime venue for large-scale regional sporting events, boost tourism, and allow Micronesia's athletes and the community to excel in the sport of their choice.

As for the Oleai Cultural Events Center that will be located across the area, the goal is for the area to be a walkable, accessible space for the community to enjoy that will be codesigned for a variety of goals and will reflect principles of "Smart, Safe Growth" development.

Both projects are funded through a \$21.2 million Economic Development Authority grant that was awarded to the CNMI in June 2021. The CNMI Infrastructure and Recovery Program is providing technical assistance and conducting surveys to ensure that both projects meet EDA Special Awards Conditions and Construction Standards.

"With the positive reception to the CNMI hosting the Pacific Mini Games last year, it's crucial that we continue to invest in our athletic facilities and continue to put the CNMI on the map as a prime destination for more large-scale regional sporting events in the future," said OPD acting director Christopher A. Concepcion.

"Once completed, the

Oleai Cultural Events Center will be a prime location to host community events yearround and will provide the CNMI's arts and culture-focused entrepreneurs a space to thrive. We're all excited to see these projects moving forward; we thank EDA, IRP, and all stakeholders for their work on these projects," said OPD project coordinator Amber Weston.

These projects align with and exemplify Sustainable Development Goal No. 3: Good Health and Well-Being; No. 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; No. 9: Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, and No. 11: Resilient Communities; No. 13: Climate Action; No. 15: Life on Land; and No. 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

The Oleai Sports Complex and the Cultural Events Center will equip the CNMI with the means and facilities to explore sports tourism and cultural tourism for years to come, expanding socio-economic sustainability as well as bolstering cultural cohesion and identity. Furthermore, the Oleai Sports Complex will continue to be an accessible facility for the community to use, as it is today.

Learn more about the SDGs and the action plans and projects to achieve them in the CNMI's Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan through our office's website at: [https://opd.gov.mp/assets/2021-2030\\_cnmi\\_csdp.pdf](https://opd.gov.mp/assets/2021-2030_cnmi_csdp.pdf). (PR)



## Special Senate session called to tackle HCR on budget law revisions

Senate President Edith E. De-Leon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has called for a special session late afternoon today, Friday, to tackle a concurrent resolution that the House of Representatives adopted to reflect proposed revisions to the fiscal

year 2023 budget law.

As this developed, House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) also called for a session for today at 3pm to discuss primarily a bill that Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan)

pre-filed that seeks to repeal and re-enact Public Law 22-22, or the fiscal year 2023 appropriations and budget law.

In today's special session, the Senate is expected to adopt House Concurrent Resolution 23-1 that basically agrees with

the projected \$116.19 million total local revenue and resources of the CNMI government that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios had identified as available for appropriation, to reflect proposed revisions to the fiscal year 2023 budget law.

In today's House session, members are expected to discuss Yumul's pre-filed House

Bill 23-31 that seeks to repeal and re-enact the fiscal year 2023 appropriations and budget law.

Yumul, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, introduced the bill in order to make revised appropriations of local funds for the operations and activities of the CNMI government, its agencies, instrumentali-

ties, and independent programs. The bill would also provide Palacios with up to 50% reprogramming authority for the Executive Branch. This authority shall not apply to funds appropriated to the Legislature or Judiciary, as well as to funds appropriated by the legislative delegations. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

### COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board meeting** on Tuesday, **March 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.** The meeting will be held in the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome.

### AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
  - A. Call to Order
  - B. Roll Call
  - C. Reading of the Notice Calling Special Meeting
  - D. Adoption of Agenda
- II. Transaction of Business
  - A. Board Resolution 01-2023 on Bank Signatories
  - B. Settlement Agreement and Release Agreement – NMI Superior Court Civil Action 11-0114 – NMI Retirement Fund vs. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, et al.,
- III. Public Comments \*
- IV. Executive Session\*\*
- V. Announcements
- VI. Adjournment

/s/  
JANICE A. TENORIO, Chairwoman Pro Tem

\* All interested persons are welcome to attend, and submit written and oral testimony on the above-agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.

\*\*Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, in consultation with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.



THIRD FLOOR, JOETEN DANDAN BLDG.  
P.O. BOX 501220 SAIPAN, MP 96950

T: (670) 664-4282 • F: (670) 235-5131  
[www.cucgov.org](http://www.cucgov.org)



### NOTICE OF THIRD OPEN AUCTION

**2014 TOYOTA COROLLA 4DR SEDAN (Color: Red)**  
**114,957 Miles**  
**Condition: Fair**  
**MINIMUM BID: \$4,000.00**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned counsel, Attorney Robert T. Torres or his designee, for and on behalf of the Bank of Guam, will sell at auction the abovementioned vehicle to the highest bidder on **March 23, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya.**

#### Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. **Rights and Duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties conducting the auction sale:

- a) withdraw the chattel mortgage (vehicle) listed for sale in the public announcement before the sale or before a bid for such chattel mortgage (vehicle) is accepted;
- b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before the chattel mortgage (vehicle) is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever there; and
- c) to reject any and all bids.

2. **Minimum Bid.** The minimum bid for the sale of the abovementioned vehicle is **\$4,000.00**. No advanced bids will be accepted. The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties. **Bidders must be present in person, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, 5960 Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya on March 23, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. to bid.** All bids less than \$4,000.00 will be rejected. Any person who registers his/her bid shall provide a valid identification card (valid CNMI Driver's License or Passport). The winning bidder shall be the person to whom the vehicle is confirmed to if the bid is accepted.

3. **Payment.** The entire purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. **Personal checks /company checks are not accepted.** All payments must be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check. The Bank of Guam shall release the chattel mortgage to the winning bidder. Failure to make payment will result in the forfeiture of the accepted bid. The next highest bidder (minimum \$4,000.00) may be awarded.

4. **Change of Terms.** The Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms conducted and enforcement of the sale by the announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by the constructive notice.

DATED this 14th day of March 2023.

/s/  
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer



### NOTICE OF SECOND OPEN AUCTION

**2019 KIA SOUL 5DR SEDAN HB (Color: Gray)**  
**48,881 Miles**  
**Condition: Poor**  
**MINIMUM BID: \$6,000.00**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned counsel, Attorney Robert T. Torres (or his designee), for and on behalf of the Bank of Guam, will sell at auction the abovementioned vehicle to the highest bidder on **March 23, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya.**

#### Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. **Rights and Duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties conducting the auction sale:

- a) withdraw the chattel mortgage (vehicle) listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such chattel mortgage (vehicle) is accepted;
- b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before the chattel mortgage (vehicle) is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever there; and
- c) to reject any and all bids.

2. **Minimum Bid.** The minimum bid for the sale of the abovementioned vehicle is **\$6,000.00**. No advanced bids will be accepted. The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties. **Bidders must be present in person at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, 5960 Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya at 10:00 a.m. to bid.** All bids less than \$6,000.00 are rejected. Any person who registers his/her bid shall provide a valid identification card (valid CNMI Driver's License or Passport). The winning bidder shall be the person whom the vehicle is confirmed to, if the bid is accepted.

3. **Payment.** The entire purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. **Personal checks /company checks are not accepted.** All payments must be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check only. The Bank of Guam shall release the chattel mortgage to the winning bidder. Failure to make payment will result in the forfeiture of the accepted bid. The next highest bidder (minimum \$6,000.00) may be awarded.

4. **Change of Terms.** Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms conducted and enforcement of sale by the announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by the constructive notice.

DATED this 9th day of March, 2023.

/s/  
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer



**NHTSA**



When they start  
to look tall and  
handsome it's  
time to find your  
designated  
driver.

For more information call CNMI Department of Public Safety  
**SAIPAN 664-9125/9084/85 | TINIAN 433-9222/2041 | ROTA 532-9433/9350**  
[www.dps.gov.mp](http://www.dps.gov.mp)



**buzzed  
drunk  
driving**  
designate a sober driver

DON'T RELY ON THE  
"LUCK OF THE IRISH."  
DESIGNATE A  
SOBER DRIVER.





## NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**POSITION:** INSTRUCTOR, HOSPITALITY/TOURISM (1 POSITION)

**LOCATION:** NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE  
AS TERLAJE CAMPUS  
P.O. BOX 501250, SAIPAN, MP 96950

**DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Participates in Program Review and Assessment activities. this includes, but is not limited to, course level assessment for all courses taught by the position, lead role in program level assessment for the Hospitality & Tourism Management program, chairing a Hospitality & Tourism Management program advisory council, and supportive role in program level assessment for other business degree programs and overall institutional assessment; Teaches a total of 30 credit hours per academic year (Fall and Spring) in the areas of Travel and Tourism, Hospitality, Food and Beverage Management, Restaurant Operations, and Guest Relations and other related courses; Uses a variety of teaching methods designed to enhance student learning and the development of critical thinking skills; Provides high quality service to students and the community; Provides academic advising of the Hospitality & Tourism Management Program and other Business majors and assists students in registration; Prepare and revises curriculum, course guides, and syllabi for courses taught; Reviews textbooks and other curricular materials for adoption, and recommended books to NMC Library to support courses; Develops, administers, evaluates, and scores tests and exams for courses taught; Assists students in supplementing classroom learning through practical internship and work-study programs; Evaluates students learning, records and submits course grades, and maintains records of student performance; Maintains office hours for consultation with students; Exhibits sensitivity of students' personal, cultural, and gender differences in a non-threatening learning environment; Participates in faculty meetings, workshops, conferences, and available professional development activities; Participates in departmental and/or institutional committee work and other college-wide activities; Participates in community activities or College representation, student recruitment, and other purposes of institutional advancement, as assigned; Assists the Department Chair, as requested, by conducting classroom observations of department faculty, both full-time and adjunct, and submitting written reports of these observations to Department Chair for faculty evaluation purposes reviews the qualifications of adjunct faculty to teach courses within the employees' areas of expertise, and makes recommendations to the Department Chair for certification of hiring; Assists the department in developing, revising, and implementing goals and objectives related to areas of expertise. Works cooperatively with other departments in implement NMC's mission; Strives to continuously improve program quality, teaching effectiveness; and professional competence. participates in ongoing departmental efforts to improve curriculum and the teaching-learning environment. Shows commitment to work in an environment committed to Total Quality Improvement (TQI); Develops and maintains, for evaluation purposes, a Performance Portfolio which documents teaching performance and outcomes, demonstrates involvement and achievement in College and community activities, and reflects continuous professional growth; Provides information and assistance to the Department Chair in budget matters relating to the Hospitality & Tourism Management and Business degree programs. Submits to the Department Chair information on activities, accomplishments, and problems/concerns for monthly reports; Provides the Department Chair w/information for textbook orders; Maintains good working relationship with departmental personnel and other College employees; Adheres to College policies and procedures; Performs other related duties as assigned.

**DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Class A:**

- Master's Degree in Tourism and/or Hospitality; and
- 60 Month Experience in Hospitality or Tourism Industries; or

**Class B (Alternative Field of Study):**

- Master's Degree in Business Administration or Business Management or Administration or Marketing or related field; and
- Eighteen (18) graduate credits in Tourism and/or Hospitality.

Foreign Equivalence is acceptable for both Class A and Class B

**Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:**

Polly DLG. Masga, Director – Human Resources  
Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus  
P.O. Box 501250, Saipan, MP 96950  
Contact no. 670-234-5498 | E-mail: polly.masga@marianas.edu

**WE ARE AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

## MARPAC donates \$5K to NMC Foundation



From left, MARPAC beverage sales manager James Lee, MARPAC consumer manager Tom Basa, Northern Marianas College president Galvin Deleon Guerrero. Ed.D., and MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney.

NMC

As part of its efforts to support higher education in the CNMI, Marianas Pacific Distributors recently donated \$5,000 in cash, in-kind prizes, and beverages to the Northern Marianas College Foundation for its upcoming golf open this weekend.

“We are thrilled to support the NMC Foundation and its mission to provide educational opportunities and resources for students in our community,” said Guy Pudney, resident manager of MARPAC. “We wish all of the players in this weekend’s

tournament the best of luck!” NMC’s tournament will be held on March 18 and 19, 2023, at the LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort.

“On behalf of the NMC Foundation, I would like to extend our sincerest thanks to MARPAC and their generous contribution for the upcoming golf open,” NMC Foundation chair Ben Babauta said. “We look forward to a successful golf open and a continued partnership with MARPAC.”

The tournament, which is the signature event of the NMC

Foundation, aims to raise funds for the college for its rebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the wake of the devastation and destruction of super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu.

Companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf) or by contacting NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at [carla.sablan@marianas.edu](mailto:carla.sablan@marianas.edu) or (670) 237-6780. **(PR)**



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-052

**Opening Date: March 14, 2023**  
**Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED**

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	<b>In-House Legal Counsel</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Executive Director/Administration</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA</b>
<b>ANNUAL SALARY:</b>	<b>\$65,000.00 - \$85,000.00 per annum, Exempt</b>
<b>CONTRACT:</b>	<b>Contracted</b>
<b>POSITION(S):</b>	<b>One (1)</b>

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of ED/Administration Division.

**Duties:**

- Provide formal and informal legal advice to management;
- Drafts and reviews a broad range of legal documents, including legal opinions, proposed agency decisions, memoranda, contracts and other procurement documents;
- Represents CUC at a variety of meetings, negotiations and hearings;
- Provides legal oversight of procurement contracts for goods, services, and construction;
- Assists management with developing policy and regulations to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulatory policies, including both local and federal statutes;
- Investigates and implements necessary actions for compliance with laws and corporate policies;
- Works closely with outside counsel regarding ongoing litigation;
- Advises management of a variety of legal issues, including, but not limited to, billing disputes, human resources matters, property-related disputes, contract negotiations and interpretations, and personal-injury claims;
- Assists management with developing policy and regulations;
- Performs short- and long-range strategic planning.
- Perform other duties of similar nature and level as assigned by management.

**Education:**

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Hold a law degree from an accredited U.S. law school. Be a current member in good standing of the bar of any state within the United States, the CNMI or Guam. If not currently a member of the CNMI Bar, be eligible for prompt admission to the CNMI Bar. For admission requirements, visit [http://www.cnmilaw.org/court\\_rules.htm](http://www.cnmilaw.org/court_rules.htm). Have excellent interpersonal skills, be mature and self-sufficient, communicate effectively orally and in writing, and possess excellent professional judgement.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Although not required, successful candidates preferably will have: Experience with utility law, federal and/or state energy regulatory law, and government procurement; Contract drafting and negotiation skills; Familiarity with working in a highly regulated industry; An understanding of the economics of electric power; A working knowledge of the legal and commercial issues involved in procurement, construction contracts, project finance, operations and maintenance agreements, and other utility project agreements; Experience working for or appearing before a federal regulatory agency; Strong business judgment and the ability to understand and respond to business issues and needs; Self-motivation, self-discipline and be results-oriented, with an ability to manage priorities and workflow; The ability to independently, and handle both small and large matters with equal effectiveness and enthusiasm; A background in finance, accounting engineering, or economics; An ability to manage multiple complex matters simultaneously.

**Knowledge of:** Applicable hardware, software, system and technology principles, methods and support techniques; Systems analysis and design methods, procedures and techniques; Business methods, principles and practices; Customer service principles; Database maintenance principles; Modern office technology; Budgeting Principles; and Basic mathematics.

**Skills in:** Providing customer service; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

**How to Apply:** Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: [employment.applications@cucgov.org](mailto:employment.applications@cucgov.org)

**P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950**  
**Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131**  
**CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.**



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23 – 048

**Opening Date: March 13, 2023**  
**Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED**

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	<b>Assistant Division Manager</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Water &amp; Wastewater Division</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA</b>
<b>ANNUAL SALARY:</b>	<b>\$45,326.00 to \$61,190.00 per annum, Exempt</b>
<b>CONTRACT:</b>	<b>Contracted</b>
<b>POSITION(S):</b>	<b>One (1)</b>

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

**Duties:**

- Supervises staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Manages daily activities and maintenance of assigned utility service operations; oversees the scheduling, production, maintenance and/or provision of utility services to include water and/or power.
- Oversees utility service processes, procedures and techniques; monitors operations and material handling and addresses issues or potential hazards; ensures safety procedure compliance and enforces policies and procedures. Receives and responds to customer issues, complaints and/or emergency situations; troubleshoots and identifies issues, initiates responses, and implements resolutions.
- Prepares a variety of utility service operational status and budget reports; gathers and organizes data; prepares and provides informational and compliance reporting. Monitors and tracks assigned budget; reviews and inspects equipment and supply needs; orders and maintains adequate supply of required parts and materials.
- Responds to emergencies during and after normal business hours.
- Acts as Drinking Water and Wastewater Division Manager in their absence.

**Minimum Requirements:**

**Education:** Completion of four (4) years of college, or its equivalent, with major work in engineering, or other field related to work with large-scale utilities, plus four (4) years of experience as a supervisor in direct charge of drinking water systems' production, treatment, and distribution, and/or wastewater collection and treatment plants utilizing activated sludge secondary treatment processes, including one (1) year of management experience including administration of budgets.

**Knowledge of:** Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques; Water, wastewater and/or power supply, generation, distribution and/or maintenance principles (based on assignment); Basic engineering and construction principles (based on assignment); Mathematical concepts; Budgeting principles; Safety principles; and Modern office technology.

**Skills in:** Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff; Managing operational and maintenance activities related to utility provision; Monitoring and overseeing processes to ensure safety and quality; Responding to customer issues or emergencies; Troubleshooting issues and implementing resolutions; Preparing status, compliance and budget reports; Monitoring budget and tracking expenditures; Monitoring and maintaining supply and equipment inventory; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; and Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing/Certification:**
  - o Current CNMI driver's license or one from another U.S. jurisdiction

Ability to obtain within three (3) years of assignment and thereafter maintain during the course of employment:

- Level 3 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in water treatment and water distribution.
- Level 3 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in wastewater treatment and wastewater collection. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

**How to Apply:** Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: [employment.applications@cucgov.org](mailto:employment.applications@cucgov.org)

**P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950**  
**Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131**  
**CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.**



Man pleads guilty to theft of services

A man who was arrested for theft of services has pleaded guilty to the charge filed against him and has since been sentenced to one year

in prison. Keene Gavin Deleon Guerrero recently pleaded guilty to the charge of theft of services and was sentenced to

an imprisonment term of one year, but all suspended. This means Deleon Guerrero will not serve jail time, but the sentence can be imposed in part or fully if he does not comply with his release conditions.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo said the sentence was imposed after considering the facts of the case, the recommendations of counsel, the mitigating circumstances,

and the plea agreement between the parties. Deleon Guerrero was placed under supervised probation for a year and was ordered to pay a probation fee of \$120. In addition, Deleon Guerrero will

pay \$64.28 in restitution to the Garapan Mobil gas station. He will also perform 80 hours of community service and he shall stay away from the Garapan Mobil gas station. (Kimberly B. Esmores)

House approves proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship Procedure

The House of Representatives approved last week the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee's recommendation to accept the Judicial Branch's proposed NMI


Judiciary Rules of Guardianship Procedure. JGO Committee chair Rep. Marissa Renee Flores stated in the report that during the public comment section of

the JGO meeting last Feb. 15, three representatives from the NMI Judiciary informed the committee that the proposed rules have already existed previously in their Rules of

Probate Procedure, but the Judiciary felt it was necessary to extract these rules from the Rules of Probate Procedure and establish them as a standalone set. These NMI Judiciary representatives further informed

the committee that such rules are in accordance with the Commonwealth Code pertaining to guardianships, Flores said. In extracting and forming the proposed Guardianship Procedures, the Judiciary did

make some changes to Rule 2 (petition or motion for appointment) to promote expediency and cases would not be put on hold waiting for a separate action to determine guardianship, Flores said. (Ferdie de la Torre)



NORTHERN MARIANAS COALITION  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
P.O. BOX 506689, SAIPAN, MP 96950  
PHONE: 670.234.3878

### VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

NMCADSV is looking for a motivated individual to join its team! We are looking for someone who is rooted in service and believes in the social justice values we uphold.

**Job Summary:** The Communications Manager will work with the Executive Director of NMCADSV and its Board to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. The Communications Manager will participate in the daily operations of NMCADSV; plan, develop, and monitor all NMCADSV communications; and provide support for NMCADSV's programmatic activities.

**Minimum Qualifications:** An understanding of and agreement with NMCADSV's mission statement and philosophy regarding the elimination of domestic and sexual violence; exceptional written communication skills for diverse audiences and platforms; experience with community organizing and/or outreach; experience with non-profit social media management; experience with website development and management; ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines; and access to reliable transportation.

**Classification & Salary Range:** Full Time, Exempt. Some nights and weekends required. Travel may be required. \$18.00/hr to \$21.00/hr (based on experience and qualifications).

Copies of the full Position Description can be requested by email at [Info@EndViolenceNMI.org](mailto:Info@EndViolenceNMI.org) or downloaded from the NMCADSV Facebook or Instagram account (@EndViolenceNMI). Hard copies are also available at the NMCADSV Office (directions below).


**To Apply:** A Resume and Cover Letter should be submitted on or before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 14, 2023. Provide a list (not copies) of any certifications and/or awards. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submit resume and cover letter to [info@endviolencenmi.org](mailto:info@endviolencenmi.org), deliver to NMCADSV's office (between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.) at the Marina Heights I Building (2nd Floor, Suite 206) or mail to NMCADSV, P.O. Box 506689, Saipan, MP 96950. (Mailed applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline.) Applicants who are invited for an interview will be asked to bring a copy of their Diploma or equivalent, Police Clearance (within last 30 days), valid ID, and a list of references.

The review of applications will begin immediately. Scheduling of interviews for the first round of candidates will begin the week of May 1, 2023 progressing until a qualified applicant is hired.

NMCADSV is an equal opportunity employer.  
Individuals from under-served communities are encouraged to apply.

*This project is 100% supported by federal grants, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, Grant Award #15JOVW-21-GG-00717-MUMU and the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Grant Award #2201MPSDVC. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this release are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

### JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-049      Opening Date: March 13, 2023  
Closing Date: March 27, 2023

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Trades Technician
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Water Division (Electrical Section)
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
<b>ANNUAL SALARY:</b>	\$20,826.00 to \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
<b>CONTRACT:</b>	Not Contracted
<b>POSITION(S):</b>	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

**Duties:**

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility; provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures.
- Provides assistance in monitoring regulatory compliance.
- Operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility.
- Identifies issues and operational concerns; performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions.
- Receives customer inquiries and trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates.
- Monitors inventory and supplies; maintains required supply levels; initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas.
- Takes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders and data; and prepares reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

**Minimum Requirements:**  
**Education:** High School Diploma or General Education Diploma or Adult Basic Education Program and 4 years of experience related to area of assignment.

**Knowledge of:** Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

**Skills in:** Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work in assigned area; Reviewing quality levels and providing technical guidance in assigned area; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Monitoring inventory and supplies; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

**Licensing/Certification:**

- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;
- Trades Licenses and/or Certifications, based on assignment;
- Water/Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Certifications, based on assignment.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

**How to Apply:** Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: [employment.applications@cucgov.org](mailto:employment.applications@cucgov.org)

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950  
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131  
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

# TRY IT BEFORE YOU BUY IT

## • 7 DAY FREE TRIAL • ANY BED IN STOCK!



**GOOD**  
**\$18.95** /week  
Queen Size

**Noctova Journey**

- Gel memory foam top
- 7" spring unit with foam encase
- Cool breathable material cover
- Also available in king size

NOCTOVA SLEEP



**BETTER**  
**\$24.95** /week  
Queen Size

**Gilded Breath Plush**

- Pillowtop layer
- Innerspring, pocketed coil
- Pressure relief & motion isolation
- Also available in king size

Sealy



**BEST**  
**\$27.95** /week  
Queen Size

**Rose Gold Firm**

- Innerspring, pocketed coil
- Hybrid, cooling technology
- Pressure relief & motion isolation
- Also available in king size

DIAL Rent-to-Own

\*After your 7 day free trial period, regular rental rates will apply. If you are not satisfied after 7 days, you can return the mattress. This is a rent to own transaction. You don't own the product until all rental payments are completed. Example: \$9.95 x 12 months = \$517.40. See store for details.



**NO CREDIT NEEDED**

Chalan Kanoa 234-DIAL | Middle Road 234-RENT



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER  
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 54Published daily at 2/F JP Center,  
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI  
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR  
editor@saipantribune.com**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

### EDITORIAL

## Ukraine support should be bipartisan

Perhaps no nation has rallied behind Ukraine as much as Estonia, where Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has been resolute on the need to defeat Russian forces—and the power of imperialism unleashed by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

This leadership has come at a cost. Estonia is suffering from war-induced inflation, and the small Baltic country is the most significant contributor to Ukraine based on GDP, donating about 44% of its military budget.

The support was expected to cost Kallas in last week's national election as populist politicians ran on reining in or even ending Ukrainian aid. But Estonian voters held their ground and gave Kallas' center-right Reform Party more of the vote than in the last election, meaning the prime minister will return to lead a governing coalition.

Estonia has been "at the forefront to support Ukraine in any dimension," Marie Jourdain, a visiting fellow at the Atlantic Council's Europe Center, told an editorial writer. Jourdain, a former French Ministry of Defense staffer, added that Eastern European nations have "an appreciation about how existential this is." She also noted that Kallas' stance was a signal not just to Estonians but also to Europeans and Americans.

But recent polls suggest American and even European alacrity is lessening, jeopardizing Ukraine, which depends on allied arms and aid to prevail. The slippage of support in the U.S. is increasingly partisan, reflecting the political splits manifest on so many other issues.

January data from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research reports that while overall support is softer than last May, similar partisan differences are intensifying over time: 63% of Democrats are in favor of "providing weapons to Ukraine" (down from 71% in May) compared to only 39% of Republicans in favor (down from 53% in May). Regarding "sending government funds directly to Ukraine," Democrats are again more resolute than Republicans, with 59% in favor (down slightly from 63% in May) compared with only 21% of Republicans (down from 28% in May).

The partisan gaps are "more being driven by our domestic discourse" than an assessment of the war itself, Emily Sullivan, a research assistant on public opinion and foreign policy for the Chicago Council, told an editorial writer. She pointed to an assessment on the state of the war that found 27% of Republicans believe "Russia has the advantage," compared with 23% of Democrats. In comparison, 23% of Republicans believe "Ukraine has the advantage," while 32% of Democrats do (overall, 48% of Republicans and 44% of Democrats believe "neither side has the advantage").

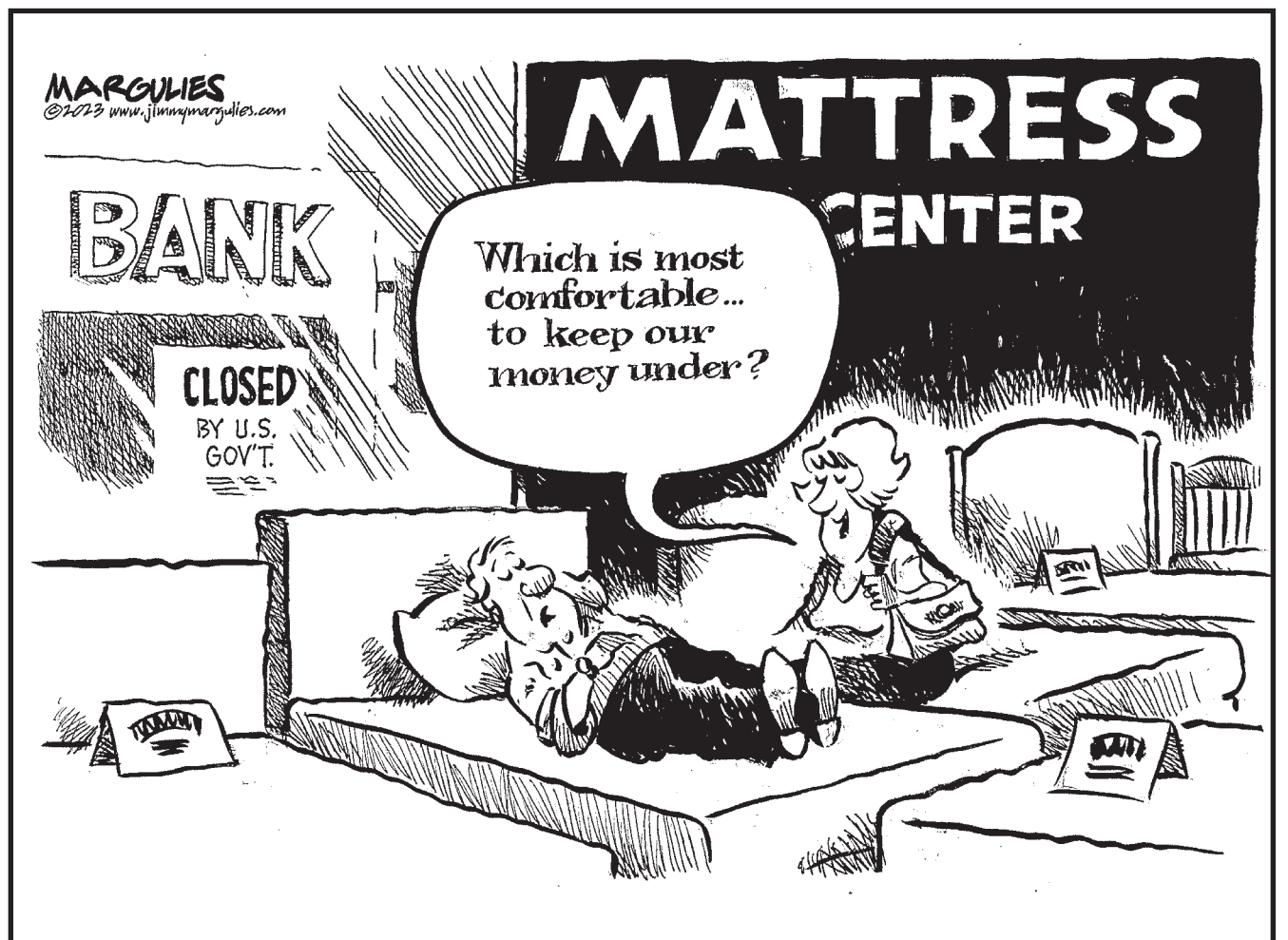
GOP support, Sullivan added, "got tied up in conversations" about inflation (data also apparent in the AP-NORC poll). And rising costs across the pond are also pounding down support for Ukraine in some European countries, according to an Economist/YouGov poll.

The Chicago Council poll shows that growing partisan separation means more Republicans favor urging Ukraine "to settle for peace as soon as possible so that the costs aren't so great for American households" (63% of Republicans favor

See UKRAINE on Next Page

MARGULIES  
©2023 www.jimmyamargulies.com

BANK

CLOSED  
BY U.S.  
GOV'T.Which is most  
comfortable...  
to keep our  
money under?MATTRESS  
CENTER

## Dragged kicking and screaming into the culture wars

For those of you who think the culture wars do not affect regular people, I am here to tell you they do.

In the past I have written that I am a self-professed "Culture War pacifist," but it is episodes like the one I'll describe below that push me into thinking that the left has gone too far and that the right might have a point.

I am currently attending graduate school as a remote student at a non-Missouri state school. That means I take 100% of my classes online. Recently I received an email telling me that a requirement of graduation is that I participate in a mandatory Bystander Training. "Every student attending (university's name) is required to attend an in-person, peer-informed training by the end of the semester. The training will prepare students to effectively respond to dangerous situations to help keep campus safe."

I immediately emailed a person at the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center who was in charge of the program and requested a deferment. My reasons for deferment included the fact that I live several states away, I attend remotely, I am an older, nontraditional student, and as a former nurse who worked in a children's hospital, I was already a mandatory reporter. I quickly received a response stating I was required to take this training and it was being offered over Zoom. There was to be no discussion. No exceptions. If I wanted to graduate, I needed to attend the training.

The bystander training consisted of a lecture of sorts on interpersonal violence and steps bystanders can take to prevent it. The school's website under the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center described the training as this: "Intervention starts with understanding interpersonal violence. This handout will discuss how to recognize warning signs, identify effective intervention techniques, process barriers to intervention, and connect students with interpersonal violence resources. Students will evaluate their role at the university as potential bystanders and learn how to create safer spaces within their community."

Online students were to sign up for the Zoom course. Unlike other modules I have taken before, this was a live event on Zoom. Students were required to remain on Zoom the entire time, which was just shy of two hours. If we logged out of Zoom before the training was over, we would not receive our certificate, which again, I need in order to obtain my diploma. After the lecture portion, we were shown videos of fellow students engaged in social situations. Students were then assigned breakout rooms to discuss intervention tactics.

Let me be clear about the scenarios we were presented: None of them included someone being actively abused. Not one of

By LYNN SCHMIDT

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Lynn Schmidt is a columnist and Editorial Board member of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



them presented children being abused by an adult. None of them showed anyone breaking a law. They were softer, requiring a personal judgment. The situations could have led to potential interpersonal violence but that is not what was pictured in the module.

Here was one scenario. While at a party, you notice Susie drinking heavily and talking to John. A few minutes later, John invites Susie upstairs. The video stops, and Zoom participants were instructed to discuss ways to stop whatever might happen from happening. The clincher was that we were truly bystanders who did not know Susie or John. Another sketch had accused Ken of cyberstalking Brian because Ken was following Brian's social media posts "too carefully." We were asked what we could do to encourage Ken to shut his behavior down.

All I want to do is pay my tuition, learn from my classes, study hard, and graduate with a master's degree. Now I was forced to spend 120 minutes of my time listening to someone else's social agenda—with my degree being held hostage.

I'm not sure which was worse for me: the fact that I was being forced to spend my free time sitting on Zoom discussing scenarios that I will never experience, or that there was no consideration of personal responsibility during any of it.

I consider myself a pro-democracy conservative very concerned about the authoritarian-populist right. Many of the right's anti-woke acts frankly scare me. That said, I can appreciate their attempts to slow down the progressive, groupthink ideology found in many institutions of higher education.

Universities and colleges employ subject matter experts and teach the next generation skill sets. They historically have encouraged free thought and critical thinking. This training not only tried to tell me how to think but also how to act.

There is an old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. In this context I would change it to say you can require a student to Zoom but you can't make her think.

I look forward to tapping out of the culture wars again.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Dark as light

There really isn't anything quite like a funeral that makes you overthink and over feel in the same way or to the same extent. And so today at the open-casket viewing of a friend, my mind and heart wandered extensively between my memories and feelings about everything and anything inevitably finding their way onto the pages here. It's an odd phenomenon that we often tend to hold people who have passed on with more care, heartfelt thought and deeper feelings than we do while they are alive, but it is a real phenomenon (for many of us) nonetheless. All too often we place greater value on the peripheral things in life than we do on our core, the time and love for those we hold most dear. It's easy to forget, I suppose, that our time here is limited. Eventually each of us will take our last breath and our time together will come to an end—ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

In perhaps the greatest gift ever bestowed on mankind, only the capacity to love melds a seamless segue between life and death—opposite but interconnected forces in a universe created out of chaotic energy and organized into perpetual cycles of female-male, dark-light and young-old. Such is the con-

cept of yin and yang, a “cosmic duality, sets of two opposing and complementing principles or cosmic energies that can be observed in nature.”

My initial introduction to yin and yang (the yin and yang symbol to be precise) was not rooted in any philosophical ideology. I only knew it as the number “69”; in fact, that's what we called it, “sixty-nine” and even as a pre-pubescent kid the visual—the interconnectivity of the six and the nine—caught my attention. My peers and I took to drawing the symbol as graffiti. Some of us going so far as to get tattoos of it on places we could hide. Therefore, our earliest attempts at rebelling (between the ages of 8 to 11 years old) are oddly connected (in my mind) to the yin and yang principle of change and difference as with disorder and order or female and male—opposites of the same kind, if you will. And yes, as kids in the Mortlocks we tattooed, burned and cut ourselves at those ages partly as a way to show how tough we were. True story, but I digress.

We can gain through time in darkness greater appreciation for light in the same way we might learn to appreciate life more when juxtaposed with death—does good even exist without bad? More importantly, we grow in our capacity to love through loss. In other words, perhaps our losses lead to stronger gains in what's left behind—more gratitude, if you will, for what we have and less obsession for what don't or wish we could have.

In what is arguably the greatest love-story and tragedy ever told, Romeo and Juliet, all that the star-crossed lovers wanted was each other. They held nothing back in telling each other as much, often expressing themselves through oxymorons to emphasize the intensity of their love and emotions for each other. Among the most famous examples, Juliet bids farewell to Romeo during the pivotal balcony scene with, “Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow.”

“The oxymoronic phrase, “sweet sorrow” signifies that temporary estrangement from one's lover, simultaneously yields unsettling sorrow and a sweet sense of hopefulness. Hence, for

### MY GLASS CUP

By JIM RAYPHAND

Special to the Saipan Tribune

James M. Rayphand is the director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and is a former executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc.



Juliet, the anticipation of her probable reunion with Romeo balances out the pain of temporary separation, emphasizing the co-existence of exquisite joy and sadness” (<https://literarydevices.net/romeo-and-juliet-oxymoron/>).

Such too is life, unveiling itself with an underlying complexity of our existence as an oxymoron, perhaps the greatest, most-impactful rhetorical device used ostensibly as self-contradiction to reveal a paradox, come to life. In this case, the paradoxical nature of life itself and of course love, the “feather of lead”—at first light as a feather like a breeze that, if unrequited, can feel like a burden as heavy as lead.

Just the other day my 11-year-old son asked me a question he heard on YouTube, “Dad?” he asked. “Isn't it weird that young people drive so fast like they just don't have enough time, but old people drive so slow like they have all the time in the world?” I watched him ponder the thought for a moment, but that was all I could do.

That's a long, drawn-out way to illustrate the meanderings of my mind since the funeral this morning and an even longer, roundabout way to offer my respects and say goodbye to a fallen friend.

Coincidentally, he was just shy of turning 69—a good run. May the family he leaves behind find peace in his absence. Rest easy, my friend...until we meet again. Parting is such sweet sorrow.

## Happy St. Patrick's Day

### LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



These two sonnets (with revisions for 2023) were first published Friday, March 16, 2018, in the *Saipan Tribune*. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and he never wore green. The green color became associated with Irish independence and superstition says if you wear green the leprechauns (*duendes*) can't see you. Patrick changed his name to Patricius using the Latin of his parentage. Patrick is a common name in Ireland and many people say of an Irishman ‘oh he's a Paddy.’ Padraig is Gaelic for Patrick and is pronounced PAW-RICK.

### Spud Sprouts Sonnet Shoutouts

On Irish people and the color green in 2023 after potatoes and green what needs to be said not much more than a taste of Irish whisky it feels good rolling around inside your head Irish call Ireland ‘Erin’ or ‘the Emerald Isle’ it rains a lot there and stays green year round many a red-haired lass has Irish eyes that smile three leaf shamrocks on the ground around a single orange, white, and green stripe on their flag wool on their backs, horses, potatoes in their fields of winning independence from England Irish brag various grains provide ample beer and whisky yields. musicians, writers, songs, dances, prose, poetry, verse in Gaelic and English one hears blessings and curse.

### On St. Patrick's Day: A Sonnet On It

Green gewgaws appear in variety stores before Valentine's Day green leprechaun T-shirts, shamrock ties and hats sold by the score green beer everywhere, a green river even runs in Chicago today In New York City's parade Irish cops, pipes, marching and more In Erin folks used to get up and go to Mass in a local church they'd eat a simple meal of beef or fish, potatoes, tea and bread many Irish leave the big \$ green commercial scene in the lurch at Mass underneath ladies' wool scarves peeks hair of red

St. Patrick passed away on the Emerald Isle 1,400 years ago kidnapped in Scotland and taken in slavery to Erin as a young boy after six years he escaped to Scotland in a boat he could row he returned to Ireland bringing Druids Irish Catholic guilt and joy now St. Patrick is used as an excuse to drink booze like a fish from green beer to whisky dear many just want to be Irish.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Saipan mayor comments on interisland air transportation issues

Sen. Paul A. Manglona, chairman, Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications:

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share my comments on the issues surrounding interisland air transportation. As leaders of our community, it is crucial for us to make sound decisions that carefully consider existing circumstances. I think we are all keenly aware that we are in the trenches of a major financial crisis, to the extent that drastic measures are presently being taken. This is evident in the government's ongoing efforts to perform a substantial overhaul of the budget, my office included, and countless businesses that are following suit by reducing their workforce significantly. No one is immune to the fiscal repercussions of our predicament, but if there are ways that we can mitigate any impact to our people, that should take precedence and be our common goal.

As I drafted my testimony for today's hearing, I asked myself, “What would happen if we didn't have cost-efficient and accessible interisland travel, and how would that affect the livelihood of our people?” The first concern that came to mind was access to healthcare. Our people in Tinian and Rota would only be limited to healthcare services that are offered on their respective island. Lives would be at risk and the mere thought was unsettling to me.

Another ramification of a high cost or restrictive interisland

travel would be a total elimination of any opportunity for an economic revival on Tinian and Rota. Tourism has been the CNMI's primary source of economic success and sustainability for quite a while. As such, our communities have been heavily reliant on the financial influx that a thriving tourism industry provides, not to mention the overall economic benefits that follow. Growth in business revenue meant more job opportunities for our people and an increase in tax receivables for our government. A high cost or restrictive interisland travel would be detrimental to Tinian and Rota.

In closing, I cannot emphasize enough that affordable interisland travel is unequivocally needed in the CNMI. Therefore, I urge you to use this opportunity to renegotiate contracts with the airlines that currently provide interisland travel in the CNMI. In your conversations, be realistic about any assistance the CNMI government can provide and clearly communicate the expectations. I am confident that we can reach an agreement beneficial to the community, the airlines, and the government, while making necessary considerations of our current financial woes. Above all, work with the airlines that reciprocate your genuine concern and care for the CNMI.

Ramon “RB” Jose Blas Camacho  
Mayor, Municipality of Saipan

### UKRAINE

From Page 10

this view compared with 36% of Democrats). Conversely, 61% of Democrats but only 33% of Republicans support “for as long as it takes, even if American households have to pay higher” consumer prices.

But rewarding Russian revanchism would only invite more of it and could send an incentivizing signal to China, which would ultimately be far more economically, militarily and geopolitically costly.






Kallas advocates “that Russia needs to go through a strategic defeat and renounce imperialistic ends because [Putin] would

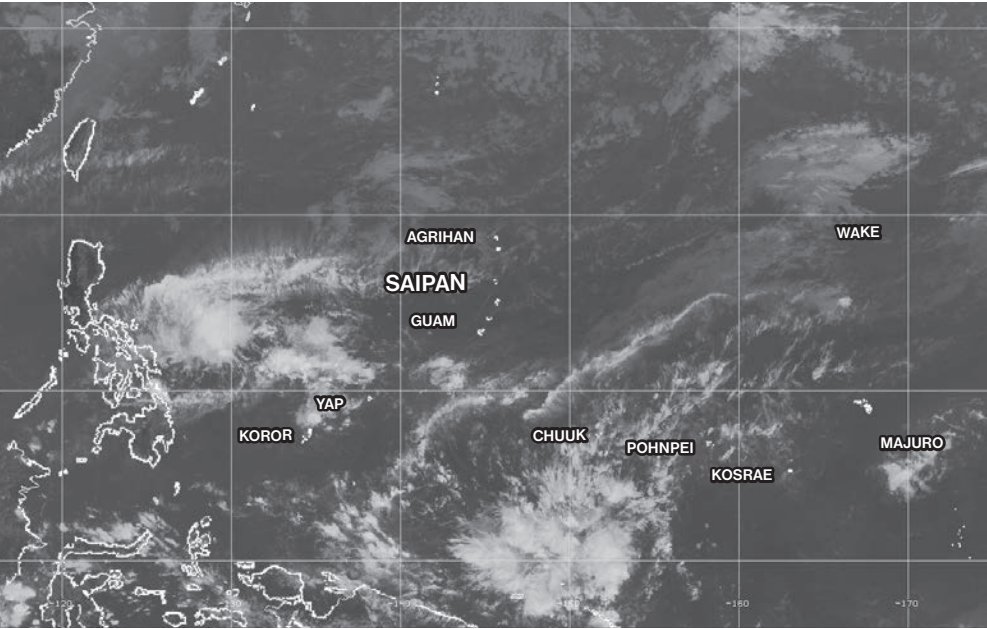
not stop in Ukraine,” Jourdain said. “The legitimacy she gained and the fact that the whole [Estonian] population, which is suffering a lot from the consequences of the war ... still decided to go on for Ukraine because it's more important” gives a “big message” to the West about what it takes “to actually live up to your values and to the survival of your own identity and your country and the future of the European Union and NATO.”

This “big message” shouldn't be heard and heeded unequally based on party identification but supported because of long-standing values previously embraced by Americans of all political persuasions.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		Mostly sunny	
84°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 8:26 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly cloudy skies and isolated showers over the Marianas at this time. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet composed mainly of swell from just north of east, along with wind waves and a small north swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 77°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	83° / 75°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Few Showers	84° / 76°	
Kosrae	Showers	84° / 77°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Monday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Tuesday	6:20 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:29 AM	1:53 PM	-
Saturday	3:27 AM	2:58 PM	-
Sunday	4:21 AM	4:03 PM	-
Monday	5:10 AM	5:04 PM	-
Tuesday	5:55 AM	6:04 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Rain	73° / 65°	
Beijing	Cloudy	52° / 32°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	75° / 68°	
Honolulu	Sunny	84° / 74°	
London	Showers	82° / 62°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	62° / 49°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91° / 75°	
Melbourne	Sunny	54° / 35°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	88° / 81°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	57° / 42°	
Osaka	Cloudy	62° / 48°	
Paris	Thunder	62° / 50°	
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 46°	
Rome	Sunny	63° / 41°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	71° / 54°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 44°	
Seoul	Cloudy	55° / 36°	
Tokyo	Cloudy	60° / 47°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	63° / 48°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:22 AM	High Tide	1.68	
10:13 AM	Low Tide	1.33	
2:34 PM	High Tide	1.65	
10:29 PM	Low Tide	-0.30	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS					
INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023					
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7	10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7	8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7
3:00 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	6,7	4:00 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7	12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7
5:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6,7	6:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	6,7
ROTA TO GUAM			GUAM TO ROTA		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)					

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.			
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022			
SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com). Website:[www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: [sales@saipantribune.com](mailto:sales@saipantribune.com)





Celebrating

years of **serving up smiles** in the CNMI!

03 | 17 | 23

A SAIPAN TRIBUNE SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT





McDonald's of Saipan

**30<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY

*Congratulations*  
McDonald's of Saipan  
on your **30<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**



**PRO  
TECH**  
GENERAL PEST CONTROL AND TERMITE ELIMINATION  
Tel.: (670) 488-0667

Chalan Lau Commercial Building Unit 102  
PO BOX 5403 CHRB  
SAIPAN MP 96950  
Tel. No. 670-488-0667  
Email: ProTech.saipan@gmail.com

# McDonald's readies array of treats for anniversary shindig

By TERI M. FLORES  
CORRESPONDENT

It's definitely going to be a big shindig this Saturday at McDonald's main branch in Chalan Lau Lau, with special activities that are sure to delight the young and old who will take part in the 30th anniversary celebration of McDonald's of Saipan.

Jewel Cubangbang, marketing assistant for McDonald's of Saipan, said the anniversary event will last from

2pm until 8pm and will include activities such as kiddie games, cake tasting (courtesy of Herman's Bakery), and smoothie sampling featuring the Mango Pineapple smoothie, compliments of McDonald's.

A good bargain that will be available exclusively from 2pm until 8pm this Saturday is McDonald's specially prized six-piece chicken nuggets or a cheeseburger for only \$1.30—only at the store's Chalan Lau Lau branch.

*Continued on Next Page*




McDonald's of Saipan

**30<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY

*Congratulations*  
McDonald's of Saipan  
on your **30<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY!**

FROM THE STAFF & MANAGEMENT OF



## SAIPAN

Latitude 15° 12' N | Longitude 145° 45' E

SAIPAN SHIPPING COMPANY, INC.  
TEL: 670-322-9706  
FAX: 670-322-3183/1981  
EMAIL: saiship@saipanshipping.com  
www.saipanshipping.com

## TINIAN

Latitude 15° | Longitude 145° 38' E

TINIAN MARINE STEVEDORE, INC.  
TEL: 670-322-9240  
FAX: 670-322-8568  
EMAIL: saisteve@pticom.com

## ROTA

Latitude 14° 10' N | Longitude 145° 15' E

ISLA SHIPPING, ROTA  
TEL: 670-532-3117  
FAX: 670-532-9888  
EMAIL: islashipping@yahoo.com

## GUAM

Latitude 13° 30' N | Longitude 144° 40' E

MARIANAS STEAMSHIP AGENCIES, INC.  
TEL: 671-633-6740/6741  
FAX: 671-633-6737/6742  
EMAIL: info@msa-guam.com  
www.msa-guam.com

Inter-Island Cargo • Shipping Agency • Vessel Operator • Charterers



**A good bargain that will be available exclusively from 2pm until 8pm this Saturday is McDonald's specially prized six-piece chicken nuggets or a cheeseburger for only \$1.30—only at the store's Chalan Lau Lau branch.**

From Page 14

Aside from a cultural performance by Te Ivi Maori, another highlight of the evening's event are the local performers featuring talents from nine Saipan schools. Cubangbang said McDonald's is happy to showcase the student performances, which the young participants will always remember with fondness.

The Ayuyu family, represented by Joe Ayuyu Jr., McDonald's of Guam and Saipan vice president, and his mother, Marcia Ayuyu, vice president of McDonald's of Saipan, are expected to deliver their messages of thanks for the support their family and their restaurants have received in the past 30 years from local vendors and the community.

Planning for this Saturday's anniversary event took three months and Cubangbang said they wanted to pay

homage to the CNMI children when they were planning this year's event. Part of McDonald's of Saipan team's goal was "to show appreciation to the local community, which has supported McDonald's for the 30 years that they have been a part of the local landscape."

Another big part of this year's anniversary is the fundraising event called "Raise the Race." Cubangbang said the 17-day fundraiser, which began on March 1 and will end on March 17, will benefit the CNMI Public School System elementary schools. This fundraiser, which was first offered in 2013 in time for McDonald's of Saipan's 20th anniversary, is being revived this year. McDonald's diners who spend \$15 minimum on their receipt are eligible to help support the school of their choice. The three schools that raise the most amount of money will get up to \$5,000.



McDonald's of Saipan  
30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
*Happy* 30<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
McDonald's of Saipan

From the management and staff of  
**AB Risk Solutions**  
In cooperation with **Aon**

**Congratulations  
McDonald's  
Saipan  
on your  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**



**D & Q**  
International Distributors  
A TanHoldings Company

*Procter & Gamble*

*Kellogg's*

*Mondelez International*



*Campbell's*



E&J Gallo Winery



**Beech Nut**



**Beach Cliff**

D&Q PO Box 504462, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel (670) 322-2706

Fax (670) 322-2711



*Bikaa*



## McDonald's of Saipan

Congratulations on 30 years of  
serving up smiles in Saipan.

---

The food you're known for, the folks you bring  
on as your family, the undeniable fun under  
your Golden Arches—we're lovin' it!





# At 24 years, Pagcu is longest serving crew member of McDonald's Chalan Lau Lau

By LEIGH GASES

leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**A**fter more than 24 years, Myrna Pagcu is now the longest serving crew member of the McDonald's of Saipan's main store in Chalan Lau Lau.

A native of Pampanga, Philippines, she made her way to Saipan 25 years ago, starting as a crew member. After many years of experience under her belt, she is now one of the restaurant's crew trainers, spending her time training new crew members on the minutiae of giving service that pleases.

Her years with McDonald's Saipan has also honed her talent for spotting potential leaders and she has made her fair share of recommendations for some who have made their way up the ranks.

Pagcu's dedication to her job over the years has been



so remarkable that she has not been absent nor late in her more than two decades of service.

One of the great things about working at McDonald's that she loves is that respect is always shown to each other in the workplace, in working with her coworkers, both young or old. She praises her bosses for being kind and helpful to her throughout her career—which is one factor why she has worked there for as long as she has.

With over 24 years of service, Pagcu is content with her career in McDonald's and looks forward to many more years of working at the restaurant until she's ready to retire—whenever that may be.

She thanks God, her managers, her general manager, and her crew members for the many years of opportunity of working for McDonald's.

McDonald's of Guam and Saipan, locally owned by Jose and Marcia Ayuyu, is the leading food service restaurant chain in the Mariana Islands. McDonald's of Guam and Saipan have served their communities for over 50 years in Guam and 30 years on Saipan and remains one of the island's largest employers.

**Pagcu's dedication to her job over the years has been so remarkable that she has not been absent nor late in her more than two decades of service.**

## Congratulations McDonald's Saipan on your 30 Year Anniversary



**Mobil**



# MCDONALD'S SAIPAN

## Celebrating 30 years of good food and outstanding customer service

By TERI M. FLORES  
CORRESPONDENT

**T**hirty years and counting—that is how Jose “Joe” Ayuyu Sr. foresees the future of McDonald’s Guam and Saipan.

Ayuyu is not just referring to the longevity of their franchise, but his company is also on track to expand its business on both islands of Guam and Saipan so they can best serve their patrons the delicious selection of sandwiches, drinks, and specialty food products that McDonald’s is known for.

The owners of the McDonald’s franchise in Guam and Saipan—Ayuyu with his wife, Marcia, son, Joe Jr., and daughters, Mable and Ashley—are known for their shared determination, perseverance and drive to succeed. The Ayuyus made sure that, as their children grew up, all of them learned and practiced these character traits that Ayuyu considers the building blocks to success.



McDonald’s of Saipan vice president and owner/operator Marcia Ayuyu poses with the crew of the store’s Garapan branch during their 29th anniversary celebration.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ayuyu also places a prime consideration on hard work and in understanding and learning about the industry where one’s business belongs to as key factors to ensuring the success of a business and

its owner. “In my case, I got the name McDonald’s, but to make it work, I hired our employees, trained them and I invested in the company,” said Ayuyu.

As an entrepreneur, he had

always dreamed of becoming a McDonald’s franchise owner. Armed with guts and the single-mindedness to turn his dream into reality, he brought the famed golden arches to Saipan when he

opened its main branch in Chalan Laulau on March 18, 1993. Three years after, his second McDonald’s branch opened in Garapan, giving both tourists and members of the local community a taste of its very popular food offerings.

Ayuyu went into the business without any background nor experience in the food service retail business, much more about a company that is known as the leading global food service provider. Prior to opening McDonald’s of Saipan, Ayuyu was first a civil servant, a former acting director of the CNMI Department of Labor. He then transitioned to the private sector, starting off as a bank manager for Bank of Guam before joining the world of luxury and high-end retail by becoming the vice president and general manager of Hakubotan Saipan. And then came McDonald’s.

Describing his experience as a first-time business owner, Ayuyu said, “I had to learn the business from the ground up, so everything about McDonald’s I had to learn them on my own. It was really challenging because when we opened McDonald’s, we were still busy raising the kids while, at the same time, I was learning the ropes of running this franchise.”

It was Ayuyu’s previous experience both as a civil servant and in the private sector that prepared him for that moment when he decided to pursue the McDonald’s franchise. His involvement in different industries had given him the courage to pursue his longtime dream of becoming

a McDonald’s franchisee. “For these, I knew I had a chance of making this work.”

Ayuyu proudly credits his wife Marcia’s support as one of the main reasons behind his family’s success in owning the McDonald’s franchise. “The journey was very challenging, but we overcame it through perseverance and hard work. Together with my wife, Marcia, we managed to prevail over difficulties, and we were able to grow the business.”

Ayuyu also attributes the success of their franchise to the support they get from the McDonald’s corporate headquarters. “McDonald’s is a great company. They make sure they give the owners and operators of their franchises training and educational opportunities by making Hamburger University available for training.” This educational facility is where McDonald’s employees are schooled in restaurant management.

In addition, McDonald’s makes conveniently available and accessible to its franchisees access to new equipment, which helps ensure the quality of products McDonald’s customers enjoy, said Ayuyu.

Having open and constant communication with the corporate office has also ensured McDonald’s of Saipan’s compliance with the high standards the company sets for its franchisees. “They want to guarantee that we offer the best—not just the food we serve but that our customer service is the best. They also make sure that our patrons are comfortable while dining

*Continued on Next Page*



## THANK YOU FOR 30 YEARS!

## JOIN US FOR A CELEBRATION

**McDonald's Middle Road**  
**Saturday March 18, 2023**  
**2:00 PM - 8:00 PM\***

**6 pc. McNuggets OR Cheeseburger for \$1.30\***

Talent Showcase  
Performance by Te Ivi Maori  
Games and Prizes

\*Games open from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm\*  
\*Performances start at 4:30 pm\*

### RACE TO RAISE

Support your favorite elementary school!

Winning Schools gets as high as

## \$5,000 CASH

**RESULTS ANNOUNCED AT 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MARCH 18**



McDonald’s of Saipan team members show their pride as employees of the local franchise of this international brand known to live its mission of being “our customer’s favorite place and way to eat and drink.”

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO





Crew members of McDonald's main branch in Chalan Lau Lau pose for a picture during the company's 29th anniversary during the annual employee appreciation party. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

#### From Page 18

at our facilities."

Innovation, the use of technology to improve and enhance service and continuous improvement in all aspects of the business is how McDonald's of Saipan remains competitive while maintaining compliance with the strict standards of food and customer service McDonald's is known for.

"We recently made major renovations at our main store at Chalan Lau Lau. The kitchen and dining areas were revamped but the biggest impact to more efficient food service is the introduction of the double drive-thru." This new system has allowed McDonald's of Saipan to guarantee faster service by allowing the franchise to accommodate more customers, thus cutting down the wait time for customers to be served.

"As we step into the future, I know there's more work to be done to ensure the delivery of food in a fast and convenient way without sacrificing quality of food and service," Ayuyu said.

To date, McDonald's has capitalized on mobile phone apps, the use of digital menu boards for both in-store and drive-thru, and self-order kiosks in stores to cater to customer convenience and fast service.

"Through customer feedback we get through our surveys, we are able to provide quality service and we do a good job of delivering this. We also continue to introduce new products while improving on our current product line," said Ayuyu.

A major part of McDonald's success, Ayuyu said, is

finding value in customer feedback. "McDonald's is survey driven. We listen to our customers through surveys, and it is the results of these surveys that we base what we do. Through these results, we are able to put together a plan to accomplish what our customers need."

The future of the franchise looks bright and promising for the Ayuyus and McDonald's of Saipan. When the company hit its 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary in 2016, the Ayuyus acquired six McDonald's restaurants in Guam, thus fulfilling their dream of expanding their franchise. And with this, they joined the ranks of being one of the largest employers in Micronesia. Today, McDonald's of Guam and Saipan is staffed by a team of over 400 employees who work in the family's 10 restaurants—eight in Guam and two on Saipan. From humble beginnings, the Ayuyus have grown McDonald's of Saipan, which is now a part of a network of 40,000 McDonald's restaurants worldwide.

In Guam, the company began the modernization of its restaurants with the renovation of its Yigo branch, which has now turned into a state-of-the-art facility with the restaurants in Tamuning and Hagatna following suit. Awaiting a reopening date is its Harmon branch which is the most recent location to undergo renovation. Once completed, the restaurant will feature an interactive children's section on the second floor of its Harmon restaurant. McDonald's in Guam will also

be adding a new branch close to the University of Guam in Mangilao, while a new store to serve Guam's northern section is set for groundbreaking in 2024, said Ayuyu. Within the next five years, Ayuyu foresees opening new restaurants in Palau and in Pohnpei.

On Saipan, the company had also spruced up its main branch in Chalan Lau Lau, which now features a new kitchen and the two lane drive-thru. Further expansions on Saipan will depend mainly on the state of the local economy, Ayuyu said. For now, McDonald's of Saipan will maintain its Chalan Lau Lau and Garapan branches. "When the opportunity arises for Saipan, we will take advantage of this. But we will heed the call if

there is a demand to open new branches."

Ayuyu said another important milestone for the company is the addition of Joe Jr., who is now the owner and operator of the restaurant's Yigo branch in Guam. "We have been preparing our children to eventually take over the business and my role now is to continue to support Joe Jr. and to make sure that things are running smoothly."

Bringing McDonald's to the Northern Marianas has brought Ayuyu personal

fulfillment and happiness. "I think that we brought a unique type of restaurant to Saipan and the Marianas that all our kids love. With our presence in the community, they don't need to go to the States or anywhere anymore to visit a McDonald's and enjoy our offerings because we have them here on the islands."

McDonald's of Saipan is grateful for the commitment of their vendors and the local community, which has stood by them and supported their restaurants

over the past 30 years.

The Ayuyu patriarch is very proud of the legacy his family has built and shares with the Northern Marianas community. "Growing McDonald's on Guam and Saipan is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We have personally benefited a lot in terms of supporting us as a family. I am so happy and blessed we have McDonald's. It has provided our family with a means of living and that's why we make sure that it's going to be around for a long time.



The Ayuyu family is shown in this photo provided by the family.

LAUREN BENSON PHOTOGRAPHY



McDonald's golden arches became one of Saipan's iconic landmarks on March 18, 1993. Photo shows a sketch of the main branch in Chalan Lau Lau. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**McDonald's of Saipan**

**Congratulations on 30 years of serving up smiles in the CNMI!**

*Your dedication to providing delicious food and excellent service has made you a beloved part of the community. We at Triple J are proud to celebrate this milestone with you. Here's to many more years of success!*

**TRIPLE J SAIPAN, INC.**

GREAT HARVEST BREAD CO. • SURF CLUB RESTAURANT • BAR-K-DINER • TRIPLE J CATERING • PAYLESS SUPERFRESH & TRUCKLOAD STORE • FIVESTAR WHOLESALE • WHOLESALE TO EVERYONE • TRIPLE J MOTORS • HERTZ & DOLLAR RENT-A-CAR • SURFRIDER RESORT HOTEL • TINIAN WESTERN LODGE • OCEAN RIDGE HOMES • SAIPAN COMFORT HOMES • SANDY BEACH HOMES • TINIAN VILLAGE LODGE TINIAN CONFERENCE CENTER • TIRE, LUBE & CAR WASH SHOP • TINIAN GARDEN B&B • TEL: (670) 234-1795 | FAX: (670) 234-7347 • EMAIL: INFO@TRIPLEJSAIPAN.COM | WWW.TRIPLEJ.NET



# Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary McDonalds of Saipan

*from* RNV Construction and Affiliates



- Credit to Bank Account (Real Time)
- Cash pick up anywhere thru payout outlets
- Door to Door Remittances
- Facilitation of PNB account opening



**VILLAROYAL**  
PAWNSHOP

- Gualo Rai Branch
- Dandan Branch
- San Jose Branch
- Chalan Kanoa Branch



[www.homesmartresidences.com](http://www.homesmartresidences.com)



[www.rnvconstruction.com](http://www.rnvconstruction.com)



(670) 235-8778



RNV CONSTRUCTION



Proud to be the official shipping  
partner for McDonald's of Saipan



## Cheers to 30 Years of Commitment to the Marianas

Matson is proud to be the official shipping partner for McDonald's of Saipan and congratulates the Ayuyu Family, the McDonald's management team, and the entire staff on their successes over the past 30 years. We applaud your longstanding commitment to the Marianas community and wish you continued success for decades to come.

[matson.com](http://matson.com)

**Matson**<sup>®</sup>



# 'McDonald's gives opportunities to the motivated'

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**  
chrystal\_marino@saipantribune.com  
CORRESPONDENT

**A**s McDonald's of Saipan celebrates its 30th anniversary on Saipan, both employees and many members of the community alike assuredly have their share of memories of the golden arches.

Joyce Asistores, the general manager of the McDonald's Chalan Lau Lau branch, certainly has lots of memories to share. As one of the earliest employees of the Saipan franchise, Asistores began working at the store's Middle Road branch just a year after its opening on Saipan in 1993. She recalled how the drive-thru was such a wonder at that time as it was one of the newest ways of service in a restaurant.

From then until today, McDonald's has been consistently moving forward and progressing, from the face-to-face drive-thru orders in the '90s, to the modernized kiosks and technology in these times. "And right now you can see how everything is modernized, all the technology, and they never stop. Each time there's something new," Asistores said.

And the franchise not only focuses on developing their restaurant but also the lives of their workers. "The investment in their employees isn't a joke," Asistores explained how her boss deeply invested in her, from travelling to get certified, going to McDonald's Hamburger University, and even at a time when she was still a foreign visa worker. Even with the amount of paperwork it takes to travel, she said her bosses still did it.

Asistores noted that the investment her employer puts into the workers does translate to the employees having a sense of loyalty. Asistores certainly can attest to that, as she has been working with the company going on 29 years.

Asistores also noted from experience that the quality of training under McDonald's is some of the best—teaching lessons that can be applied

to life and isn't limited to customers and happy meals. Some of the things she had learned and passes on when training other individuals include people skills, how to approach certain situations, discipline, and proper time management.

"Each day you gain more experience dealing with different personalities, different behaviors, of not just the external customer but also the internal customers, which are your coworkers," she said. "If you work at McDonald's you learn the discipline, the work ethic. You've got to be on time; that's important. Looking your best for a customer, 'cause you want to be professional to them. Presentable [and] professional, because your appearance will also give a first impression."

She said if customers notice how presentable you are, they will also be assured that the food being served is also taken care of.

Asistores said she has learned so much and is still learning, this time from a leadership perspective. She enjoys learning the everyday challenges and is still learning new ways to work through a situation and have the right mindset. "Really, some people might think McDonald's is all about...making the food, making the burgers, and everything, but it's not. ...With all the trainings from the very beginning, you will learn a lot."

Aside from learning these skills, there's also food knowledge, such as food safety. She noted that McDonald's likes to keep their facilities clean and has several outside organizations check them, in addition to their own clean checks.

"So I'm very proud that all managers of McDonald's are all Serve Safe-certified. So they're really on top of it when it comes to food safety, cleanliness, and everything."

Asistores said that she would recommend working at McDonald's. "We encourage them... and show them the importance of being motivated, committed, and dedicated. At McDonald's you never run out of new things; we learn everyday."

She said each day they may face new struggles, new challenges, and but also new achievements in the end. "So the learning never stops and, when you learn, you keep on improving and getting better." As a leader she too learns leadership behavior everyday. "...I can attest to all of that because I started as a crew and now I'm already here...and I'm very thankful to my employers, my bosses for all the opportunity they gave to me, giving me the opportunity to lead the restaurant here on Saipan. It's really something that they gave me their trust."

"So yes I'd encourage them [to join McDonald's] because...McDonald's believes in developing people. It's not like you come first as a crew and you'll be forever a crew. No, once they see the poten-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joyce Asistores, the general manager of the McDonald's Chalan Lau Lau branch.

tial in you, they will start developing you and a lot of opportunities will open up. So it doesn't matter if you've been here for just three months, if you have the commitment,

dedication, and you're motivated, they will develop you...and you can kind of climb the ladder going up to the management."

Asistores is the first gen-

eral manager in Guam and Saipan to win the Ray Kroc award in 2019. The award is given to only 1% of all McDonald's general managers in the United States.

From the management and staff of

*Hafa Adair!*  
**Saipan Tribune**  
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER



# 'McDonald's is both a career and family'

By CHRYSTAL MARINO  
chrystal\_marino@saipantribune.com  
CORRESPONDENT

**R**uthzel L. Perez, who is the general manager of the Garapan branch of McDonald's, sincerely believes that she was destined to join the McDonald's of Saipan family.

Perez and her husband had just relocated to Saipan from Palau in 2009 and she soon joined the McDonald's of Saipan just about three months later.

"I'll never forget the person that interviewed me was Mr. Ayuyu"—referring to Jose "Joe" Ayuyu Sr., the owner/operator and president of McDonald's Guam and Saipan—"at the office located on Middle Road, and I was kind of nervous at the time 'cause I was still new on the island—like, I've only been on island for three months." She felt more at ease after the interview and was offered the job soon after.

Although she was never a part of the McDonald's team when she was still in the Philippines and going to college, Perez said it was my dream even then. That was because McDonald's was known to cater to and help students in need of work while studying. She explained that she had never gotten the job there, but when she came here, she thought, "Why not?"

Perez said she started working for the company in 2010 as a crew member, and from there worked her way up. After two years, Perez was awarded perfect attendance

and was recognized as the Employee of the Year. Her bosses saw potential in her and began working with her, and she soon progressed up to management.

"Of course they motivate us [and] they also provide us the training we need because at McDonald's, we always put people first. Who I am today is because of the support of McDonald's, and our boss's investment in us to learn," she said.

One of the most memorable time she had while working in the franchise was when she got the opportunity to go to the McDonald's Hamburger University in 2021, and their General Managers Summit right after. This would be the prelude to her becoming a general manager herself.

"I'm very grateful thankful to the company, of course, and the Ayuyu organization for trusting my leadership, and investing in me by sending me off island to go to Hamburger University, and to learn the different areas of how to run a great restaurant." She said the experience was one she would never forget.

Perez also noted that working at McDonald's has helped her continually develop as an individual and a leader, especially in the area of people skills. "McDonald's helped me to improve the behavior that I have, because I thought I was OK, but learning all these from the McDonald's training, all the classes we attended, working with different people in the restaurant, understanding their personality, it helps me kind of improve..." she said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

McDonald's of Saipan general manager for Garapan Ruthzel Perez.

She said she has learned to really come out of her shell and be a more open. These times, when having new employees, especially those who are shy, she helps motivate them and encourage them to be open.

Perez said she would fully encourage others to work at McDonald's, since there are so many great work traits and ethics that are taught and practiced. "It's not just fastfood. You have a career at McDonald's. And again it's really on you, how you will step up. There's a career at McDonald's, and at McDonald's we put people first. We promote a positive work environment, that's also family-oriented. We are like your second family, we take you as our family when at the restaurant, we give you the best training, we have. ...The people that have been here and work here know the experience—there's no place like McDonald's."

"I really salute this organization, especially [McDonald's of Guam and Saipan vice president and owner/slash operator Marcia Ayuyu]," said Perez. "She's really on top when it comes to community, she's really giving back everything to the community...and I'm very happy that McDonald's is always there for the community. So in the restaurant we always support them. They're putting people first and also at the same time giving back to the community."

She believes their staff are also motivated and happy to be a part of the community, and it gives her great pride to be part of it as well.

## Navarro: Learning the ropes at McDonald's has taught me many things



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John Michael Navarro is McDonald's of Saipan's 2022 Employee of the Year.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO  
chrystal\_marino@saipantribune.com  
CORRESPONDENT

**J**ohn Michael Navarro, who is McDonald's 2022 Employee of the Year, believes that working at McDonald's has taught him a lot of things that he will bring with him if he seeks jobs in other fields of work.

For one, he has learned to be more social, "especially with my coworkers and my managers, so that led me to become more social outside of work."

It has also taught him to respect others and how to be happy. "You can learn many things from here that would really benefit you if you were to work outside of McDonald's," Navarro added.

Now when he sees new workers, it takes him back to when he first started and just watching them progress encourages him. "I will highly recommend this [working at McDonald's] because it's like a big step into the workforce, and you can really benefit from working here."

Navarro came to work at McDonald's after graduating high school. "I needed a job just to keep myself not bored at home, because right after high school I felt bored, and I told my mom I needed a job. So that's what I did. I started job hunting around, and that's when I applied to McDonald's," he said.

Soon after he got his food handler's certificate, which is one of the require-

ments for becoming a McDonald's crew members, he started working in July 2021. "I first started at the ice coffees, then made my way up to cashier, then drive-thru order taker and now am inside the kitchen."

One of the things that Navarro enjoys while working at McDonald's is the family aspect and getting to bond with his co-workers. "This is my second family." He enjoys the camaraderie and, on rough days, he'd try to encourage and uplift his workmates.

As a student at the Northern Marianas College and on his second year pursuing a nursing degree, Navarro's schedule does get pretty tight but he said McDonald's has been accommodating with his schedule.

He described being "shook" when he learned that he was receiving the Employee of the Year award in 2022, but is grateful at the same time. As Employee of the Year, no doubt Navarro already has good customer service, but when pressed for what makes customer service good, he said, "Bond with customers, make the customers first priority."

Navarro said he's proud and happy to be a part of the McDonald's of Saipan family and takes pride in its service to the community, its philanthropy work, and the donations it has made. "Like when they donated to my college; it gives me a big smile," he said. Now that's a happy meal.



# Congratulations

McDonald's of *Saipan*



All the best to the management and staff of  
McDonald's of Saipan on this momentous occasion.  
Wishing you many years of success.



Tan Siu Lin  
Foundation



# NMTech-OVR partnership aids those with developmental disabilities

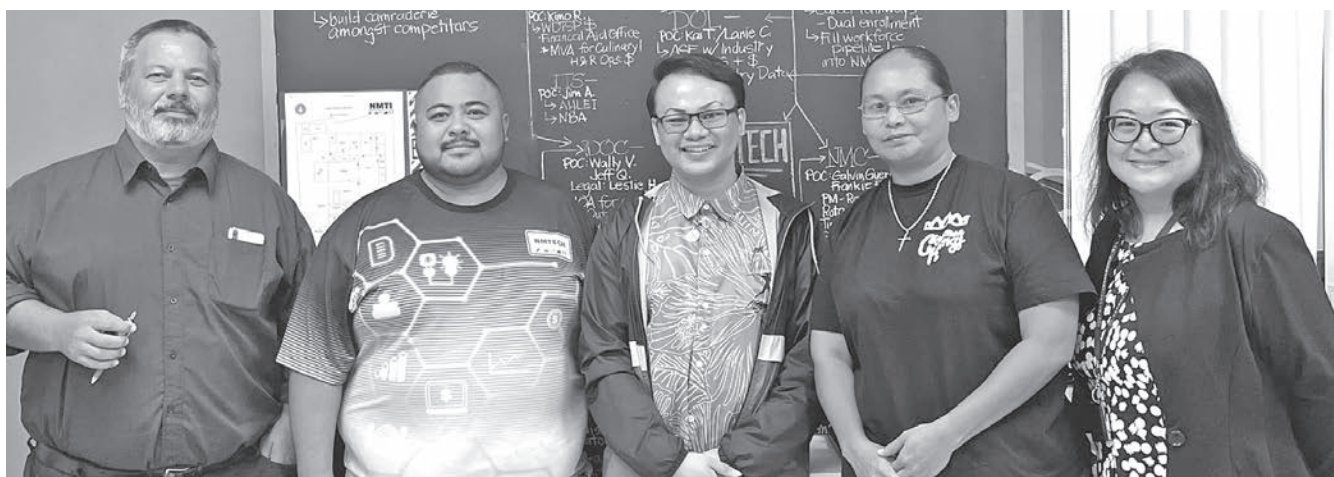
The Northern Marianas Technical Institute has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families get to have the same opportunities as others in the community.

The MOU was signed by NMTech CEO Jodina Attao and OVR director James Rayphand, alongside Arlene Yamagishi and Sam Santos from OVR.

A news release yesterday stated that working with

OVR will allow a smooth and hassle-free transition for consumers to take classes at NMTech. OVR will cover the tuition for consumers to receive educational training and possible job placement services in the career technical field.

NMTech is taking this action as part of the celebration of March as Developmental Disabilities Month Awareness Month and ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have these equitable opportunities in place.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Marianas Technical Institute CEO Jodina Attao, second from right, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation director James Rayphand, leftmost, have signed a memorandum of understanding that will allow OVR clients to take classes at NMTech.

Many people with disabilities are interested in trade classes such as automotive

technology and culinary arts. NMTech has two consumers that are currently tak-

ing classes. NMTech is also working with Center for Living Independently and Com-

monwealth Office of Transit Authority to support consumers. (PR)

## COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.  
PO BOX 501055-Saipan-MP-96950  
PHONE: (1-670) 237-5600/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962  
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMPORTS.COM

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) CPA-RFP-007-23

#### GENERATOR PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICES & REPAIRS

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP"), and other contract provisions, for proposals from qualified firms, companies and/or corporations to provide Generator Preventive Maintenance Services and Repairs at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport facilities.

This RFP is issued pursuant to Chapter 40-50, Procurement Rules and Regulations of Title 40 of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (the "NMIC"). Title 40, including chapter 40-50-225, Request for Proposals, is applicable to the process followed by the RFP.

The successful proposer will be awarded 2 years to perform the services with option to renew for an additional 2 years at the sole discretion of CPA.

The proposal package will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning February 21, 2023.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted if it's not in the best interest of CPA.

Proposals must be submitted no later than **4:00 P.M., March 23, 2023** to the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO  
Executive Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ogo bill prohibits e-cigarettes, vapes for minors

Rep. Julie A. Ogo (Inp-Rota), who chairs the Commerce and Tourism Committee of the House of Representatives, is proposing a bill to prohibit the possession and use by minors of any electronic vapor delivery devices, commonly known as e-cigarettes or vapes, and any liquids, regardless of chemical contents.

After hearing concerns from school administrators, teachers, staff, and constituents about how suspension from

school is not discouraging repeated offenses, Ogo is worried that usage may be high enough to be concerning as the research materials she has read warn of harmful effects even if the liquids do not contain nicotine.

From research materials, Ogo found out that chemicals in what is often referred to as "vape juices" and the heating of those "vape juices" create

vapors that are not only harmful to the lungs but may lead to sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression, high likelihood of smoking regular tobacco, and other major health issues. Urine samples collected from teenage vapers showed high contents of various chemicals that pose a threat to their health (Nemours Children



Ogo

Health, 2021; Center for Disease Control Report, 2021).

Before pursuing any action, however, Ogo surveyed on social media, and the result showed that responders support stricter laws. "I wish there were more respondents to indicate that our people are genuinely interested in participating in their governance, but I am not discouraged," she said. "Enacting a law prohib-

iting the possession and use of these items and harsher penalties for violations on the minors, adults, and business establishments is a means to discourage using them, and encourage our community to keep a lookout for each others' children" Representative Ogo, stated.

She stated further that "the law intends to plug loose ends safeguarding our children from harming themselves. Provisions of education, intervention, and rehabilitation will be a part of the legislation, and the penalty funds collected will be used to support those intents. The end game is not to punish for the sake of punishing but to ensure that the child and parent(s) are in the system where help is available."

The poll is at: <https://poll-forall.com/pkx2dnmm>

Comments are welcome at [kuentosmarianas@gmail.com](mailto:kuentosmarianas@gmail.com) (PR)

## USCIS issues guidance on analyzing employers' ability to pay wages

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issued yesterday policy guidance on how we analyze an employer's ability to pay the proffered wage for immigrant petitions in certain first, second, and third preference employment-based immigrant visa classifications.

Employers seeking to classify prospective or current employees under the first, second, and third preference employment-based immigrant visa classifications that require a job offer must demonstrate their continuing ability to pay the proffered wage to the beneficiary as of the priority date of the immigrant petition.

The relevant regulation requires the employer to submit annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements for each available year from the priority date. If the employer has 100 or more workers, USCIS may instead accept a financial officer statement attesting to the employer's ability to pay the proffered wage. The updated guidance also details various types of additional evidence employers may submit and explains how USCIS considers any evidence relevant to the employer's financial strength and the significance of its business activities. Many employ-

ers satisfy the ability to pay requirement by submitting payroll records demonstrating that, during the relevant time period, they have been paying the employee at least the proffered wage.

The update also adds an appendix containing an overview of common business forms or structures to help officers and stakeholders better understand the types of petitioning entities filing Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers, or Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker. These business forms or structures are also relevant to the new commercial enterprises underlying a Form I-526, Immigrant Petition by Standalone Investor, or Form I-526E, Immigrant Petition by Regional Center Investor. Specifically, the appendix includes information on how different types of businesses are formed, their fundamental characteristics, the various tax forms that each business organization files with the Internal Revenue Service, and basic tax terms.

This guidance, contained in Volume 6 of the Policy Manual, is effective immediately upon publication and applies prospectively to petitions filed on or after that date. (USCIS)

## MCS continues to offer lower monthly payments for school year 2023-2024

Mount Carmel School recently announced their continuation of payment plan options for the 2023-2024 school year.

Families can continue to divide the usual 10-month payment plan over 12 months. In addition to payment plan options, Mount Carmel School also launched its annual Early Bird Special, which provides a variety of discounts for families looking to secure their child's enrollment for the upcoming school year.


The annual early bird registration discount is as follows: K4 registration is \$75 per student, which is normally \$100. K5 registration is \$100, which will be \$150 after the deadline. For students in grades first through 12th, the registration fee is \$200 per student, which is normally \$400. The deadline for the Early Bird registration and fees is scheduled for May 5, 2023. After the deadline, registration rates will be

adjusted accordingly. Mount Carmel School will also continue to offer discounts for families who enroll more than one child.


The school's Leadership Team will be exploring ways to expand scholarship funding and financial aid. This may include earmarking a portion of all Education Tax Credit revenue toward the school's scholarship and financial aid program.

"Parents and guardians work hard to invest in their child's education and we aim to make this effort easier by offering payment plan options. We will continue to support families with our financial aid programs," said school vice principal Filmah Buenafior.

To learn more about enrolling at Mount Carmel School for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year, call 234-6184 or visit [www.mountcarmel-saipan.com](http://www.mountcarmel-saipan.com). (MCS)



## PROCUREMENT SERVICES CNMI GOVERNMENT



### INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB23-BECQ/RT-DLNR-42300051-CIF ROTA

**SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 03, 2023 TIME: 9:30 A.M.**

**PURCHASE OF ONE (1) AGRICULTURAL TRACTOR AND THREE (3) ATTACHMENTS: ONE (1) FRONT-END LOADER, ONE (1) DISKING HARROW, AND ONE (1) ROTARY MOWER FOR THE ROTA, DLNR**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORIZON BLDG, GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ **ELI D. CABRERA**  
BECQ ADMINISTRATOR

/S/ **GERALDINE T. CRUZ**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS



## Business

# Chamber opposes 121% hike in CW fee

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is not in favor of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's proposed rule that will increase fees for certain immigration requests and petitions, including the I-129CW or the petition for a CNMI-Only Nonimmigrant Transitional Worker.

In his letter to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan dated Feb. 7, 2023, Chamber president Joe C.

Guerrero said the proposed rule will bring additional challenges to local businesses that employ CW workers.

"Under the new proposed fee, an employer filing a I-129CW must pay a total of \$1,265 per petition, inclusive of the base fee of \$1,015 plus a \$200 CNMI Education Funding Fee and \$50 Fraud Prevention and Detection Fee. The proposed base fee increase is 121% higher, or \$555 more than the current fee and will cause severe financial hardship to the many businesses

affected," he said.

Guerrero said while the Chamber understands the rationale for the proposed rule, which is to allow USCIS to fully recover the costs of all expenses and meet projected demand for services, they are very concerned about the timing and the severe consequences that the new fee will impose on businesses in the CNMI.

He added the proposed rule will particularly affect smaller employers, who are now the most vulnerable as they struggle to stay afloat during the difficult economic times the CNMI is currently experiencing.

"As you are aware, the Gross Domestic Product for the CNMI, as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, has dropped by 29.7% in 2020 after decreasing by 11.3% in 2019. With the 40% drop in GDP in recent years, the prolonged and slow resumption of our primary industry, tourism, and the NMI government's fiscal crisis unfolding before us, now more

» **Asks Kilili's help for phase-in solution**

## With Saudi deals, US, China battle for influence in Mideast

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a matter of days, Saudi Arabia carried out blockbuster agreements with the world's two leading powers—China and the United States.

Riyadh signed a Chinese-facilitated deal aimed at restoring diplomatic ties with its arch-nemesis Iran and then announced a massive contract to buy commercial planes from U.S. manufacturer Boeing.

The two announcements spurred speculation that the Saudis were laying their marker as a dominant economic and geopolitical force with the flexibility to play Beijing and Washington off each other. They also cast China in an unfamiliar leading role in Middle Eastern politics. And they raised questions about whether the U.S.-Saudi relationship—frosty for much of the first two years of President Joe Biden's term—has reached a détente.

But as the Biden administration takes stock of the moment, officials are pushing back against the notion that the developments amount to a shift in the dynamics of the

U.S.-China competition in the Middle East.

The White House scoffs at the idea that the big aircraft deal signals a significant change in the status of the administration's relations with Riyadh after Biden's fierce criticism early in his presidency of the Saudis' human rights record and of the Saudi-led OPEC+ oil cartel move to cut production last year.

"We're looking forward here in trying to make sure that this strategic partnership really does in every possible way support our national security interests there in the region and around the world," White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said of the U.S.-Saudi relationship. He spoke after Boeing announced this week the Saudis would purchase up to 121 aircraft.

But China's involvement in facilitating a resumption of Iran-Saudi diplomatic ties and the major Boeing contract—one the White House said it advocated for—have added a new twist to Biden's roller-coaster relationship with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.



MARK RABAGO  
Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe C. Guerrero speaks during the business organization's 2022 "Bowties & Diamonds" Business Person of the Year annual fundraiser gala last January at Crowne Plaza Saipan's Hibiscus Hall.

than ever, businesses need help to remain in operation."

Guerrero added that if more local businesses remain open, more U.S. workers potentially will remain employed and this would help the ultimate recovery of the economy.

"They can continue to employ U.S. workers and provide essential services and goods to residents, including health-care, local agriculture products, elderly care, education, and information technology, to name a few," he said.

Instead of the proposed rule's immediate implementation, Guerrero asked Sablan's help in developing a "phase-in" proposal to gradually increase the proposed I-129CW petition fees in equal amounts over the next seven years in anticipation of the CNMI GDP improving during this timeframe.

"We look forward to meeting with you to discuss the proposed rule and to explore ways to continue assisting Northern Marianas businesses during these difficult times," he said in his letter to Sablan.

## FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

†Bernadine Ayuyu Borja Benavente

We, the family of the late †Bernadine Ayuyu Borja Benavente would like to invite our relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of her passage unto eternal life.

Daily Mass is being offered at the Saint Jude Church from March 19, 2023, to March 27, 2023.

Mass schedules are as follows:

March 19, 2023 (Sunday) at 8:00 a.m.

March 20, 2023 – March 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

March 26, 2023 (Sunday) at 8:00 a.m.

March 27 (Monday) at 6:00 p.m.

Nightly rosary will be held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Manuel C. Borja (Angelina) in Koblerville from March 19, 2023, to March 26, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

On the final day, March 27, 2023, rosary will be said at 12 noon. Dinner will follow immediately after the mass at the family residence in Koblerville. Your presence, thoughts, and prayers are greatly appreciated.

**Mr. and Mrs. Manuel C. Borja (Angelina), children and Family**



# Nation

## US pregnancy deaths dropped in 2022, after COVID spike

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Deaths of pregnant women in the U.S. fell in 2022, dropping significantly from a six-decade high during the pandemic, new data suggests.

More than 1,200 U.S. women died in 2021 during pregnancy or shortly after childbirth, according to a final tally released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2022, there

were 733 maternal deaths, according to preliminary agency data, though the final number is likely to be higher.

Officials say the 2022 maternal death rate is on track to get close to pre-pandemic levels. But that's not great: The rate before COVID-19 was the highest it had been in decades.

"From the worst to the near worst? I wouldn't exactly call that an accomplishment," said

Omari Maynard, a New Yorker whose partner died after childbirth in 2019.

The CDC counts women who die while pregnant, during childbirth and up to 42 days after birth. Excessive bleeding, blood vessel blockages and infections are leading causes.

COVID-19 can be particularly dangerous to pregnant women, and experts believe it was the main reason for the

2021 spike. Burned out physicians may have added to the risk by ignoring pregnant women's worries, some advocates said.

In 2021, there were about 33 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. The last time the government recorded a rate that high was 1964.

What happened "isn't that hard to explain," said Eugene Declercq, a long-time maternal mortality researcher at

Boston University. "The surge was COVID-related."

Previous government analyses concluded that one quarter of maternal deaths in 2020 and 2021 were COVID-related—meaning that the entire increase in maternal deaths was due to coronavirus infections or the pandemic's wider impact on health care. Pregnant women infected with the coronavirus were nearly 8 times as likely to die as their uninfected peers, according to a recent study published by BMJ Global Health.

The bodies of pregnant women are already under strain, their heart forced to pump harder. Other health problems can make their condition more fragile. And then on top of that, "COVID is going to make all that much worse," said Dr. Elizabeth Cherot, chief medical and health officer for the March of Dimes.

It didn't help that vaccination rates among pregnant women were disappointingly low in 2021—particularly among Black women. Part of that was related to limited vaccine availability, and that the CDC did not fully recommend shots for preg-

nant women until August 2021.

"Initially there was a lot of mistrust of the vaccine in Black communities," said Samantha Griffin, who owns a doula service that mainly serves families of color in the Washington, D.C., area.

But there's to more to it than that, she and others added. The 2021 maternal mortality rate for Black women was nearly three times higher than it was for white women. And the maternal death rate for Hispanic American women that year rose 54% compared with 2020, also surpassing the death rate for white moms.

More than a year into the pandemic, a lot of doctors and nurses were feeling burned out and they were getting less in-person time with patients.

Providers at the time "were needing to make snap decisions and maybe not listening to their patients as much," Griffin said. "Women were saying that they thought something was wrong and they weren't being heard."

Maynard, who is 41 and lives in Brooklyn, said he and his partner experienced that in 2019.

## Trump's VP pick? Some in GOP already jockeying for consideration

**OXON HILL, Md. (AP)**—Trips to Mar-a-Lago. Glowing speeches. Front-row seats at major events.

The first Republican presidential primaries are nearly a year away and the candidate field is unsettled. But already, a shadow contest of another sort is underway with several Republicans openly jockeying to position themselves as potential running mates to Donald Trump, the early front-runner for the nomination.

"A lot of people are right now auditioning," Trump boasted to supporters in Florida last month.

The mere mention of a running mate this early in the process is a departure from the traditional timeline of presidential primaries, where candidates typically spend the opening months of a campaign introducing themselves to voters and sharing their visions for the country. But as a former president, Trump needs no introduction and is eager to project an air of inevitability around his campaign, particularly as attention builds around Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is widely seen as his toughest potential GOP rival.

Trump campaign officials insist that the vice presidential search is not something they have been actively discussing.

"We appreciate all support for

President Trump, but the clear focus is on making sure that he wins the Republican nomination and is well-positioned to win the general election in 2024," said Jason Miller, a longtime Trump adviser.

That, however, hasn't stopped some could-be candidates from taking full advantage of opportunities to be in close proximity to Trump, at his club and at events. The dynamic was on full display earlier this month at the Conservative Political Action Conference, where a trio of women who have been mentioned as possible contenders sat in the audience to cheer Trump's headline speech.

They were Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, Elise Stefanik of New York and Kari Lake, the news anchor-turned-failed-Arizona gubernatorial candidate who ended her remarks at a keynote event dinner by kissing a portrait of Trump that was placed on stage.

While Trump, according to people who have spoken to him, is in no rush to make a decision and understands that he has to let the nomination process play out, he has nonetheless talked through possible choices since well before he formally announced his candidacy last fall. In those conversations, he has indicated his interest in selecting a woman this time around.

### THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

† *Vicente (Ben) Cabrera Attao*

JULY 19, 1952 - MARCH 26, 2020



We, the family of the late †Vicente Cabrera Attao - lovingly known as "Ben," would like to invite all our relatives and friends to join us in the Eucharistic Celebration as we commemorate the Third Anniversary of our beloved Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather, Son, Brother, Brother-in-Law, and Uncle passing unto eternal life.

Daily Mass of Intentions to begin on Saturday, March 18-26 at 6:00am  
at Mount Carmel Cathedral, except for Sunday (March 19 and 26) at 9:00 am.

Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

May our Lord bless each of you.

Un dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase and Hiimaqis Qe'ciyew'yew.

*Elizabeth Arthur Attao, Children and Family*



# Asia

## N. Korea launches ICBM before S. Korea-Japan summit

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile Thursday just hours before the leaders of South Korea and Japan were to meet at a Tokyo summit expected to be overshadowed by North Korean nuclear threats.

The North's first ICBM test in a month and third weapons test this week also comes as South Korean and U.S. troops continue joint military exercises that Pyongyang considers a rehearsal to invade.

The missile flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) with a maximum altitude of 6,000 kilometers (3,730 miles) during the 70-minute flight, according to South Korean and Japanese assessments. That's similar to the flight details from a February launch of another ICBM, which experts said demonstrated a potential range to reach deep into the U.S. mainland.

The missile fell in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan after being launched on a steep trajectory, apparently to avoid neighboring countries. Japan said the missile landed outside its exclusive economic zone and that there were no reports of damage of ships and aircraft.

North Korea has yet to test ICBMs on a standard trajectory, but it has repeatedly claimed it possesses functioning nuclear missiles. Some



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's missile launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, March 16, 2023. AP

foreign experts still doubt the North has mastered the technologies needed to build warheads small enough to be placed on those missiles and protect the warheads during atmospheric reentry.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said Washington will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and its allies South Korea and Japan. She said the launch "needlessly raises tensions and risks destabilizing the security situation in the region."

Before heading Tokyo for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida,

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said, "North Korea's reckless provocations will pay the clear price."

During an emergency security meeting on the North Korean launch, Yoon instructed the South Korean military to thoroughly proceed with its ongoing exercises with U.S. forces, conduct some of the planned joint drills in an intensive manner and strengthen Seoul-Washington-Tokyo security cooperation, according to Yoon's office.

In Tokyo, Kishida said: "We must further strengthen cooperation among the allies and like-minded countries."

The Yoon-Kishida summit

set for Thursday afternoon was arranged after Yoon's government last week took a major step toward repairing bilateral ties strained by Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. The South Korean plan—to use local funds to compensate some of the colonial-era forced labor victims without contributions from Japanese companies that employed them—has met fierce domestic opposition, but it reflects Yoon's resolve to boost Seoul-Tokyo-Washington security cooperation.

"Yoon's Tokyo trip faced domestic opposition for allegedly rushing historical reconciliation in the interest

Between 2005 and 2020, the Chinese have invested more than \$130 billion in Latin America, according to the United States Institute of Peace. Trade between China and the region has also shot up, expected to reach more than \$700 billion by 2035.

That investment has translated to rising power for China and a growing number of allies.

In Honduras, that has come in the form of construction of a hydroelectric dam project in central Honduras built by the Chinese company SINO-HYDRO with about \$300 million in Chinese government financing.

Meanwhile, in many countries, the U.S. government has not stepped in with similarly sized projects.

While many view the investment as a positive step for nations that often struggle to pull together funds for development, some, like June Teufel, professor of Political Science at the University of Miami, worry about the long-term ripple effects rising Chinese power could have.

## Honduras ditching Taiwan raises larger geopolitical concerns

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Honduras' decision to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of China is yet another sign of growing Chinese influence in Latin America.

For decades the Asian superpower funneled billions of dollars into investment and infrastructure projects across the region. Now, as geopolitical tensions simmer between China and the Biden administration, that spending has paid off.

Honduras' decision was the second foreign policy coup in a week for China, which brokered an agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to re-establish diplomatic relations last week.

Now, Taiwan will be recognized by only 13 countries. But some of the few remaining in Latin America, like Paraguay and Guatemala, promised Wednesday to keep their support for Taiwan.

Honduras' minister of foreign relations, Enrique Reina, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Hondurans "are grateful" for their past relationship with Taiwan,

but that their economic links to China ultimately pushed their government to cut diplomatic ties.

"These are political decisions. The world has been moving in this direction," Reina said. "It is a complex decision, we understand, but Honduras' foreign policy should seek to benefit the people. We believe that this step will benefit the country."

The Central American nation follows the steps of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic in turning their backs on Taiwan.

Honduras' announcement on Tuesday was a blow to the Biden administration, which has rather fruitlessly tried to persuade countries in the region to stick with Taiwan. Taiwan, a U.S. ally, has pushed for sovereignty at the same time that Chinese President Xi Jinping has insisted the island is firmly under its control.

In that sense, Tuesday's announcement also exemplifies the American government is "losing its grasp on" Latin America, said David

Castrillon-Kerrigan, research-professor on China-related issues at Colombia's Externado University.

"For countries, like Honduras, not recognizing the government in Beijing meant missing opportunities," Castrillon-Kerrigan. The United States "is definitely losing influence on every front, especially the economic front, but also diplomatically, politically and culturally."

It's left the island with a dwindling number of allies. Reina told AP that the Biden administration "must understand and respect" Honduras' needs and decisions.

But some, like Paraguay and Guatemala, remained steadfast in their support for Taiwan. Guatemalan officials reiterated the government's "recognition of Taiwan as an independent nation that shares democratic values."

Over the past two decades, China has slowly carved out a space for itself in Latin America by pouring money into the region, investing in major infrastructure, energy and space projects.

of improving relations with Japan," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "North Korea's ICBM test on the day of the Yoon-Kishida summit may have been intended to aggravate those politics but instead makes patently clear the need for deepening security cooperation among U.S. allies."

President Joe Biden welcomed the South Korean plan as a major step toward enhancing the partnership between two of America's closest allies, which together host about 80,000 U.S. troops. The United States has sought stronger alliances in Asia to deal with a Chinese rise and North Korean threats.

North Korea's pursuit of an expanded nuclear arsenal has pushed South Korea and Japan to seek to boost their security partnerships with the United States, as both countries are within striking distance of

North Korean nuclear-capable missiles. Last October, North Korea fired an intermediate-range missile over northern Japan, forcing communities there to issue evacuation alerts and halt trains.

Under Kishida, Tokyo has also made a major break from its post-World War II principle of self-defense only, adopting a new national security strategy in December that includes the goals of acquiring preemptive strike capabilities and cruise missiles to counter growing threats from North Korea, China and Russia.

The North's ongoing aggressive run of weapons tests has been widely expected. Leader Kim Jong Un last week ordered his military to be ready to repel what he called "frantic war preparations moves" by his country's rivals, referring to large joint drills between the U.S. and South Korea that began Monday.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Thai officials search for radioactive cylinder from plant

BANGKOK (AP)—Authorities in Thailand expanded their search Wednesday for a metal cylinder with radioactive contents that has gone missing from a power plant, warning the public that it poses a danger to health. The 30-centimeter- (12-inch-) long cylinder containing the radioactive material Caesium-137 was discovered missing last Friday from a piece of machinery at a steam power plant in Prachinburi province, 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Bangkok. Ake Wongjinda, a public relations officer for the provincial government, said Wednesday that authorities have inspected locations such as junk shops, scrap metal yards and secondhand stores in Prachinburi and neighboring Chachoengsao province for the 25-kilogram- (55-pound-) cylinder.

#### Pakistan: 8 insurgents, 2 kids killed in battle with troops

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistani security forces attacked a militant hideout near the Afghan border Wednesday, prompting a shootout that killed eight of the insurgents and two children and wounded two soldiers, the military said. It was unclear whose fire killed the two children during the raid on the outpost in South Waziristan, a district in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The

military, in its statement about the violence, did not identify the militant group to which the slain insurgents belonged. South Waziristan served as a base for the Pakistani Taliban and other militants until a few years ago, when the army said it cleared the region of insurgents. But occasional attacks have continued.

#### EU eyes more naval visits in disputed South China Sea

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The European Union wants to step up its naval visits and possibly engage in joint military training exercises to promote freedom of navigation and respect for international law in the disputed South China Sea, an EU official said Wednesday. EU special envoy to the Indo-Pacific region Richard Tibbels said the 27-nation bloc is also ready to provide satellite surveillance to help countries like the Philippines respond to natural disasters and protect their interests, as tensions pitting China against its smaller neighbors escalate in the disputed waterway. The outreach is part of an EU strategy, unveiled in 2021, to focus its actions in the Indo-Pacific to contribute to regional security amid more intense geo-political competition. The long-term engagement would be grounded on shared values, including a commitment to respect democracy, human rights and the rule of law, Tibbels said.



## World

## US and Russia ratchet up rhetoric over downing of drone

**KYIV, Ukraine (AP)**—Russia and the United States ratcheted up their confrontational rhetoric Wednesday over a U.S. surveillance drone that encountered Russian warplanes and crashed near Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, which the Kremlin has illegally annexed. At the same time, the two countries' defense chiefs opened a dialogue about the incident.

The Kremlin said the flight proved again that Washington is directly involved in the fighting in Ukraine and added that Moscow would try to recover the drone's wreckage from the Black Sea. U.S. officials said the incident showed Russia's aggressive and risky behavior and pledged to continue their surveillance.

Russia has long voiced concern about U.S. surveillance flights near its borders, but Tuesday's incident signaled Moscow's increasing readiness to raise the ante as tensions soar between the two nuclear powers. It reflected the Kremlin's appetite for brinkmanship that could further destabilize the situation and lead to more direct confrontations.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who said the incident was part of a "pattern of aggressive, risky and unsafe actions by Russian pilots in international airspace," spoke to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, on Wednesday for the first time in five months.

"It's important that great powers be models of transparency and communication, and the United States will continue to fly and to operate wherever international law allows," Austin told reporters in Washington.

Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who also appeared at the briefing, said, "We know that the intercept was intentional. We know that the aggressive behavior

was intentional," but whether the Russian warplane's collision with the MQ-9 Reaper drone was intentional was still unclear.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in its report of the call with Austin that Shoigu noted the U.S. had provoked the incident by ignoring flight restrictions the Kremlin had imposed due to its military operation in Ukraine and also blamed "the intensification of intelligence activities against the interests of the Russian Federation." Such U.S. actions "are fraught with escalation of the situation in the Black Sea area," it said, warning that Russia "will respond in kind to all provocations."

Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council, said in televised remarks the drone incident was "another confirmation" of direct U.S. involvement in the Ukraine conflict. The Kremlin has repeatedly said the United States and other NATO members have become direct war participants by supplying weapons and intelligence to the Kyiv government and pressuring it not to negotiate peace.

Patrushev, a confidant of President Vladimir Putin, also said Russia would search for the drone's debris, but added, "I don't know if we can recover them or not, but we will certainly have to do that."

U.S. officials said Russia dispatched ships to try to recover the wreckage, which Milley said were likely submerged 4,000 to 5,000 feet (1,200 to 1,500 meters) deep.

The U.S. has no vessels in the Black Sea because Turkey closed the Bosphorus Strait to warships in 2022, except for those returning to home port.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said the drone was in international airspace when the Russian warplane struck its pro-



Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, left, accompanied by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Mark Milley, speaks during a briefing at the Pentagon in Washington, Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

peller. U.S. officials accused Russia of trying to intercept the unmanned aircraft, although its presence over the Black Sea

— a strategic military and economic area for both Russia and Ukraine — was not uncommon.

"It is also not uncommon

for the Russians to try to intercept them," Kirby said, adding that such an encounter "does increase the risk of miscalcula-

tions, misunderstandings."

Kirby said the U.S. "took steps to protect the information and to protect, to minimize any effort by anybody else to exploit that drone for useful content."

Sergei Naryshkin, head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, said Russia is capable of recovering the wreckage.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated the Defense Ministry's statement that Russian jets didn't use their weapons or hit the drone. He repeated his description of U.S.-Russia relations as at their lowest point but added that "Russia has never rejected a constructive dialogue, and it's not rejecting it now."

In Washington, Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov expressed concern about "the unacceptable actions of the United States military in the close proximity to our borders."

## Cyclone Freddy wanes after battering Malawi, Mozambique

**BLANTYRE, Malawi (AP)**—Cyclone Freddy has dissipated after killing hundreds of people and displacing thousands in Mozambique and Malawi since late last week, although flooding remains a threat in both countries, a regional monitoring center said late Wednesday.

The cyclone has killed at least 225 people in Malawi's southern region including Blantyre, the country's financial hub, according to local authorities. Another 88,000 people are displaced. In neighboring Mozambique, officials say at least 20 people have died since the storm made landfall in the port town of Quelimane on Saturday night. Over 45,000 people are still holed up in shelters, with about 1,300 square kilometers (800 square miles) still under water, according to the EU's Copernicus satellite system.

"There are many casualties — either wounded, missing, or dead and the numbers will only

increase in the coming days," said Guilherme Botelho, the emergency project coordinator in Blantyre for Doctors Without Borders. Malawi, which has been battling a cholera outbreak, is at risk of a resurgence of the disease, Botelho said, "especially since the vaccine coverage in Blantyre is very poor."

The aid organization suspended outreach programs to protect its staff against flash floods and landslides but is supporting cyclone relief efforts at a local hospital.

Freddy was initially projected to exit back to the sea on Wednesday but has since waned and is no longer classed as a tropical cyclone, the United Nations' weather monitoring center in Réunion said.

But even with the cyclone having dissipated, "the emergency will not be over for many communities as rain from upland areas continues to flood downstream areas over the coming days," said Lucy

Mwangi, the country director for Malawi at the aid organization Concern Worldwide.

"Even rich countries that are advanced democracies would have been no match for the level of destruction this cyclone has brought," said Kim Yi Dionne, a political scientist at the University of California Riverside. Freddy accumulated more energy over its journey across the Indian Ocean than an entire U.S. hurricane season.

Yi Dionne said that the scale of damage is despite Malawi's disaster agency having prepared and planned "for the challenges that come with our contemporary climate crisis."

Scientists say climate change caused by mostly industrialized nations pumping greenhouse gases into the air has worsened cyclone activity, making them more intense and more frequent. The recently ended La Nina that impacts weather worldwide also increased cyclone activity in the region.

African nations, who only

contribute about 4% of planet-warming emissions, are "once again paying the steepest price to climate change, including their own lives," said Lynn Chiripamberi, who leads Oxfam's southern Africa humanitarian program.

Cyclone Freddy has caused destruction in southern Africa since late February, pummeling Mozambique as well as the islands of Madagascar and Réunion last month.

"Freddy is quite an exceptional weather phenomenon," Anne-Claire Fontan, a tropical cyclone scientific officer at the World Meteorological Organization told The Associated Press. Its longevity, distance covered, the number of times it has intensified and the amount of energy it accumulated over time has been extraordinary, she said.

She added that its second landfall in Mozambique "is explained by the presence of two competing steering influences. It is not rare."

## WORLD BRIEFS

## Israelis step up protests after Netanyahu rejects compromise

**TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)**—Israeli protesters pressed ahead on Thursday with demonstrations against a contentious government plan to overhaul the judiciary, pushing back against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after he rejected a compromise proposal that was meant to defuse the crisis. Despite the effort by the country's figurehead president, Isaac Herzog, to seek a way out of the stalemate, the

sides appeared to be further digging in. Netanyahu and his allies were set to barrel forward with their original plan despite weeks of mass protests and widespread opposition from across Israeli society and beyond as well as warnings by Herzog that Israel was headed toward an "abyss." Protesters were kicking off a third day of disruption since the crisis began, with roads set to close to make way for demonstrators. Protesters in Jerusalem drew a red streak on the streets leading to the country's Supreme Court and a small flotilla of

boats was blocking the shipping lane off the coast of the northern city of Haifa.

## Brazil reintroduces visa requirement for US tourists, others

**RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)**—Brazil is reintroducing the requirement to obtain tourist visas for citizens of the U.S., Australia, Canada, and Japan starting Oct. 1, the foreign ministry said. Former president Jair Bolsonaro had scrapped the visa requirements in 2019 to bolster the country's tourism industry, but the four countries

continued to demand visas from Brazilians. The decision to grant the visa exemptions had represented "a break with the pattern of Brazilian migration policy, historically based on the principles of reciprocity and equal treatment," the foreign ministry said in a statement released quietly late Monday. "Brazil does not grant unilateral exemption from visiting visas, without reciprocity, to other countries," the ministry said, while noting that the government is ready to negotiate visa waiver agreements on a reciprocal basis.

## Macron's pension plan advances despite strikes across France

**PARIS (AP)**—Thousands of people angered over President Emmanuel Macron's plan to raise the retirement age joined a national strike on Wednesday as a committee of lawmakers advanced the proposal. It remains to be seen whether Macron can command a parliamentary majority for his plan to raise the age from 62 to 64 so that workers can pay more money into the system. If not, he could risk imposing the un-

popular changes unilaterally. The plan also would deny a full pension to anyone who retires at 64 without having worked for 43 years — short of that, they'd have to wait until 67. Macron has promoted the changes as central to his vision for making the French economy more competitive. Unions remained combative late Wednesday, calling on lawmakers to vote against the plan and denouncing the government's legal shortcuts to move the bill forward as a dangerous "denial of democracy."



# Off The Wall

## Beloved and debated, French bulldog becomes top US dog breed

**NEW YORK (AP)**—For the first time in three decades, the U.S. has a new favorite dog breed, according to the American Kennel Club.

Adorable in some eyes, deplorable in others, the sturdy, push-faced, perky-eared, world-weary-looking and distinctively droll French bulldog became the nation's most prevalent purebred dog last year, the club announced Wednesday. Frenchies ousted Labrador retrievers from the top spot after a record 31 years.

Why?

"They're comical, friendly, loving little dogs," says French Bull Dog Club of America spokesperson Patty Sosa. City-friendly, with modest grooming and exercise needs, she says, "they offer a lot in a small package."

Yet the Frenchie's dizzying rise—it wasn't even a top-75 breed a quarter-century ago—worries its fans, to say nothing of its critics.

The buzzy little bulldogs have been targeted in thefts, including last month's fatal shooting of a 76-year-old South Carolina breeder and the 2021 shooting of a California dog walker who was squiring singer Lady Gaga's pets.

There's concern that demand, plus the premium that some buyers will pay for



**AP**  
Lola, a French bulldog, lies on the floor prior to the start of a St. Francis Day service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Oct. 7, 2007, in New York.

"exotic" coat colors and textures, is engendering quick-buck breeders and unhealthy dogs. The breed's popularity is sharpening debate over whether there's anything healthy about propagating dogs prone to breathing, spinal, eye, and skin conditions.

The British Veterinary Association has urged people

not to buy flat-faced breeds, such as Frenchies. The Netherlands has prohibited breeding very short-snouted dogs, and the country's agriculture minister aims to outlaw even owning them.

"French bulldogs can be a polarizing topic," says Dr. Carrie Stefaniak, a Glendale, Wisconsin-based veterinarian

who's on the Frenchie club's health committee.

She has treated French bulldogs with breathing difficulties, and she stresses that would-be owners need to research breeders and health testing and to recognize that problems can be expensive to treat.

But she's no Frenchie foe.

She owns two and has conditioned them to run agility courses and take hilly hikes.

"These dogs can be very fit, can be very active," Stefaniak said. "They don't have to be sedentary dogs that can't breathe."

The AKC's popularity rankings cover about 200 breeds in the nation's oldest canine

registry. The stats are based on nearly 716,500 puppies and other dogs newly registered last year—about 1 in every 7 of them a Frenchie. Registration is voluntary.

The most rarely owned? English foxhounds.

The rankings don't count mixed-breeds or, at least for now, Labradoodles, puggles, Morkies and other popular "designer" hybrids. The AKC's top 10 were: French bulldogs, Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, German shepherds, poodles, bulldogs, Rottweilers, beagles, dachshunds and German short-haired pointers.

With roots in England and then France, French bulldogs became chic among American elites around the turn of the 20th century, then faded from favor.

That changed, rapidly, in this century. Social media and celebrity owners (ranging from Leonardo di Caprio to Megan Thee Stallion to U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) gave the dogs fresh exposure. Still more came last year, when U.S. TV audiences watched a Frenchie named Winston take second place at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show and then win the National Dog Show hosted by the Kennel Club of Philadelphia.

## Maine motorists appeal to keep naughty vanity license plates



**AP**  
Peter Starostecki and his kids Sadie, center, and Jo Jo, pose behind their car with the vanity license plate that the state of Maine has deemed inappropriate, Wednesday, March 8, 2023, in Poland, Maine.

**AUGUSTA, Maine (AP)**—A Maine vegan whose custom license plate contains the word "tofu" is one of the motorists caught in a state crackdown on vulgar tags.

Car owners across the United States can pay an extra fee to customize license plates, sparking creativity and personality but causing headaches for state officials who have to de-

cide what's acceptable.

Maine had for several years allowed people to put just about any combination of letters and numbers on their vehicle plates, including words and phrases that other states would ban. But the state decided to change course and this year recalled 274 plates it deemed inappropriate.

Some people are

fighting back.

So far the state has rejected all of the appeals, including one brought by the vegan whose license plate referenced tofu.

The state concluded the license plate "LUVTOFU" could've been seen as a reference to sex instead of admiration for bean curd. The motorist insisted there was no mistaking his intent because

the back of his car had several tofu-related stickers.

"It's my protest against eating meat and animal products," Peter Starostecki, the disappointed motorist, said after a zoom session with a hearing examiner for the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Heather Libby and her best friend grudgingly gave up their matching license

plates that contained a word for a female dog.

"People are so sensitive nowadays," said Libby, of Jonesport, after a hearing examiner rejected her appeal. "I just think it's foolish."

When the state effectively ended the review process for so-called vanity license plates in 2015, some residents filled their plates with all manner of profanities, including F-bombs, either spelled out or abbreviated.

## Michigan man says son, 6, ordered \$1K in food from Grubhub

**CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)**—A Michigan man says he was left with a \$1,000 bill after his 6-year-old son ordered a virtual smorgasbord of food from several restaurants last weekend, leading to a string of unexpected deliveries—and maybe a starring role in an ad campaign.

Keith Stonehouse said the food piled up quickly at his Detroit-area home Saturday night after he let his son, Mason, use his cellphone to play a game before bed. He said the youngster instead used his father's Grubhub account to order food from one restaurant after another.

The boy's mother, Kristin Stonehouse, told The Associ-

ated Press on Thursday that Grubhub has reached out to the family and offered them a \$1,000 gift card. The company also is considering using the family in an online promotional campaign, she said. Grubhub officials did not immediately respond to a message from the AP seeking comment.

Keith Stonehouse said he was alone with his son while his wife was at the movies when Mason ordered jumbo shrimp, salads, shawarma and chicken pita sandwiches, chili cheese fries and other foods that one Grubhub driver after another delivered to their Chesterfield Township home.

"This was like something out of a 'Saturday Night Live'

Residents in a state known for being laconic and even-tempered soon were sporting uncensored plates pairing the F-word with "snow," "haters," and "ALS,"—the incurable neurodegenerative disease.

After license plate freedoms spiraled out of control, the Maine Legislature directed the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to reestablish a system for vetting the state's roughly 120,000 vanity license plates.

skit," Keith Stonehouse told MLive.com.

He added: "I don't really find it funny yet, but I can laugh with people a little bit. It's a lot of money and it kind of came out of nowhere."

Keith Stonehouse said his son ordered food from so many different places that Chase Bank sent him a fraud alert declining a \$439 order from Happy's Pizza. But Mason's \$183 order of jumbo shrimp from the same restaurant went through and arrived at the family's house.

Stonehouse said it took the arrival of a few orders of food for him to realize what was going on. By that time, there was nothing he could do to stop the orders from coming.



# Science & Technology

## Scientists create mice with cells from 2 males for 1st time

By LAURA UNGAR  
AP SCIENCE WRITER

For the first time, scientists have created baby mice from two males.

This raises the distant possibility of using the same technique for people—although experts caution that very few mouse embryos developed into live mouse pups and no one knows whether it would work for humans.

Still, “It’s a very clever strategy,” said Diana Laird, a stem cell and reproductive expert at the University of California, San Francisco, who was not involved in the research. “It’s an important step in both stem cell and reproductive biology.”

Scientists described their work in a study published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*.

First, they took skin cells from the tails of male mice and transformed them into “induced pluripotent stem cells,” which can develop into many different types of cells or tissues. Then, through a process that involved grow-

ing them and treating them with a drug, they converted male mouse stem cells into female cells and produced functional egg cells. Finally, they fertilized those eggs and implanted the embryos into female mice. About 1% of the embryos—7 out of 630—grew into live mouse pups.

The pups appeared to grow normally and were able to become parents themselves in the usual way, research leader Katsuhiko Hayashi of Kyushu University and Osaka University in Japan told fellow scientists at the Third International Summit on Human Genome Editing last week.

In a commentary published alongside the *Nature* study, Laird and her colleague, Jonathan Bayerl, said the work “opens up new avenues in reproductive biology and fertility research” for animals and people. Down the road, for example, it might be possible to reproduce endangered mammals from a single male.

“And it might even provide a template for enabling more people,” such as male

same-sex couples, “to have biological children, while circumventing the ethical and legal issues of donor eggs,” they wrote.

But they raised several cautions. The most notable one? The technique is extremely inefficient. They said it’s unclear why only a tiny fraction of the embryos placed into surrogate mice survived; the reasons could be technical or biological. They also stressed that it’s still too early to know if the protocol would work in human stem cells at all.

Laird also said scientists need to be mindful of the mutations and errors that may be introduced in a culture dish before using stem cells to make eggs.

The research is the latest to test new ways to create mouse embryos in the lab. Last summer, scientists in California and Israel created “synthetic” mouse embryos from stem cells without a dad’s sperm or a mom’s egg or womb. Those embryos mirrored natural mouse embryos up to 8 ½ days after fertilization, containing the same structures,

including one like a beating heart. Scientists said the feat

could eventually lay the foundation for creating synthetic

human embryos for research in the future.

## NASA Webb telescope captures star on cusp of death



This image provided by NASA shows the star Wolf-Rayet 124, center, captured by the James Webb Space Telescope in June 2022.

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.** (AP)—The Webb Space Telescope has captured the rare and fleeting phase of a star on the cusp of death.

NASA released the picture Tuesday at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas.

The observation was among the first made by Webb following its launch in late 2021. Its

infrared eyes observed all the gas and dust flung into space by a huge, hot star 15,000 light-years away. A light-year is about 5.8 trillion miles.

Shimmering in purple like a cherry blossom, the cast-off material once comprised the star’s outer layer. The Hubble Space Telescope snapped a shot of the same transitioning star a few decades ago, but it

appeared more like a fireball without the delicate details.

Such a transformation occurs only with some stars and normally is the last step before they explode, going supernova, according to scientists.

“We’ve never seen it like that before. It’s really exciting,” said Macarena Garcia Marin, a European Space Agency scientist who is part of the project.

## How this little see-through fish gets its rainbow shimmer



This image provided by Qibin Zhao shows ghost catfish showing iridescence.

**NEW YORK** (AP)—You can see right through this little aquarium fish from Thailand: Its skin is almost completely transparent. But when the light hits it just right, its body flickers with shimmering rainbow colors.

Now, scientists have figured out how this fish—called the ghost catfish—creates its iridescent glow.

That glow comes from within, according to a study published Monday in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. As light passes through the fish’s skin, it hits tiny structures in the muscle that turn the light into a colorful spectrum.

The ghost catfish—sometimes known as the glass catfish—is a small species native to rivers in Thailand, averaging just a few inches (centimeters) long. It’s sold around the world as an aquarium fish.

Other creatures are also iridescent, creating the shimmering rainbow effect where colors shift as you move. Usually, they have shiny outer surfaces that reflect the light—like a hummingbird’s feathers or a butterfly’s wings, explained Arizona State University biologist Ron Rutowski, who was not involved with the research.

But the ghost catfish has no scales, said senior author Qibin Zhao, a physicist at China’s

Shanghai Jiao Tong University, who became fascinated by the fish after seeing it in an aquarium store.

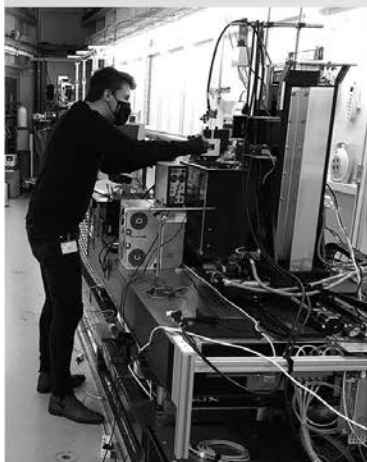
Instead, it has tightly packed structures in the muscles that can bend light into rainbow hues, which researchers found after shining different lights and lasers onto its body in the lab. As the ghost catfish swims, those muscles relax and tighten, sending off a glinting range of colors.

And the very see-through skin, which lets in around 90% of outside light, is essential: “We wouldn’t be able to see the colors if the skin of the fish is not so transparent,” Zhao said in an email.

### Science Matters

## X-rays of a living lithium battery

Swedish researchers have observed how the lithium in a lithium metal cell acts as it charges and discharges – insights that may lead to higher capacity batteries.



Scientist operates a 3D X-ray tomographic microscope (related to a medical CT scanner) that provides second-by-second images of a lithium metal battery at work

### The finest metal

**Lithium atom** • 3 electrons  
• 3 protons  
• 3 neutrons

**Lithium** (“stone” from Greek) is the lightest solid element, a soft, silvery metal, highly reactive and never found pure in nature

Occurs as a hydride mineral; industrially refined from sea water

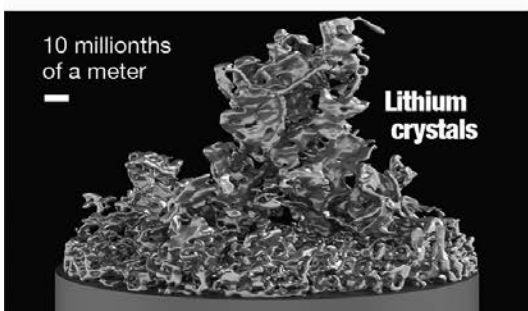
### Family of lithium battery versions

**Lithium-ion cells:** Used widely in cars, phones; weight of graphite electrode is a problem

**Lithium metal cells:** Temperamental, experimental form; may have three to five times ion cell’s energy density

**Lithium-air cells:** Light-weight, uses oxygen from air; power and durability still an issue

**Lithium-sulphur cells:** Light-weight, rechargeable; sulphur replaces cobalt in lithium-ion cell



**Microscopic view of tiny, fast-growing lithium metal structures** in the battery as it charges and discharges, dissolving and depositing metal

The tree-like structures cause short circuits or even runaway heating, and the battery fails

Source: Aleksandar Matic of Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden); *Nature Communications* journal  
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

© 2023 TNS



# Life & Style

## James Gunn to direct ‘Superman: Legacy,’ aiming for 2025

By **LINDSEY BAHR**  
AP FILM WRITER

James Gunn is directing a Superman film.

“Superman: Legacy,” which Gunn also wrote, is also set for a July 11, 2025, he and his co-chair and fellow CEO of DC Studios Peter Safran announced Wednesday.

The film, Gunn said, deals with the superhero’s journey to make sense of both his aris-

tocratic Kryptonian heritage and his small town, midwestern upbringing as Clark Kent. The legacy of Superman has been somewhat fraught recently. In October, Henry Cavill announced that he would be returning to the role starting with a cameo in “Black Adam.” Two months later, though, Cavill was back on social media with the news that he was out.

“This news isn’t the easiest, but that’s life,” Cavill wrote. “The changing of the guard is something that happens. I respect that. James and Peter have a universe to build.”

Gunn and Safran were announced as the new DC leaders just a few days after “Black Adam” opened in October, replacing Wal-



Gunn

ter Hamada, who had headed DC Films for four years. And Cavill as Superman was one of the casualties of the new guard.

“It has been a long road to this point,” Gunn wrote on Twitter Wednesday. “I was offered Superman years ago - I initially said no because I didn’t have a way in that felt

unique and fun and emotional that gave Superman the dignity he deserved. ... Then a bit less than a year ago I saw a way in.”

Gunn also said the release date is the same as his late father’s birthday.

“He was my best friend,” Gunn wrote. “He didn’t understand me as a kid, but he supported my love of comics and my love of film and I wouldn’t be making this movie now without him.”

Gunn has for several years

been the rare director to bounce between both DC and Marvel films. He first came to DC after directing Marvel’s well-regarded “Guardians of the Galaxy” films. When the Walt Disney Co. temporarily dropped Gunn over old tweets that joked about rape and pedophilia, he jumped to DC and made the supervillain film “The Suicide Squad,” a kind of blockbuster do-over that followed David Ayer’s much-maligned “Suicide Squad.”

## Italian novelist: Leonardo’s da Vinci’s mother was a slave

**MILAN (AP)**—An Italian scholar and novelist has provided fresh fodder for an old debate over the identity of Leonardo da Vinci’s mother, proffering a recently unearthed document as evidence that she arrived on the Italian peninsula as a slave from the Caucasus region of Central Asia.

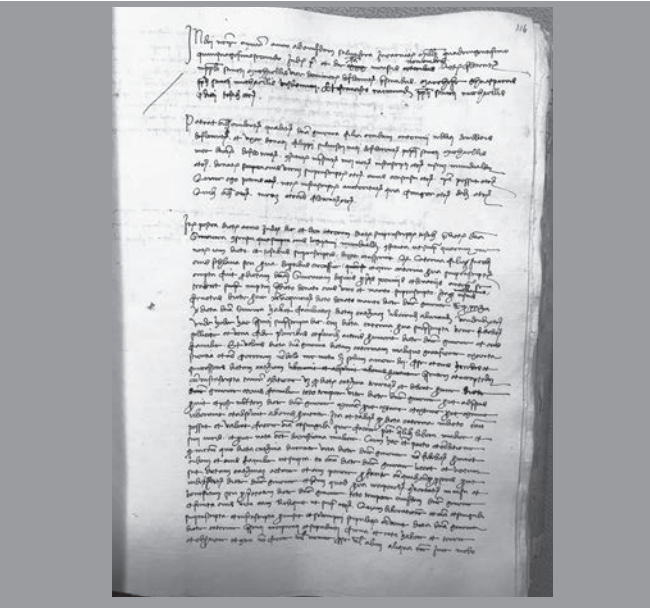
Carlo Vecce, an Italian literature professor at the University of Naples L’Orientale, has revealed his theory in a new novel, “Il Sorriso di Caterina,” or “Caterina’s Smile.” He based his claim on a document discovered in the State Archives in Florence that granted freedom to a girl named Caterina.

Leonardo’s father notarized the record six months after the birth of the Renaissance genius, who went on to paint masterpieces including the “Mona Lisa.”

Vecce said he originally was intent on proving that Leonardo’s mother was not an enslaved person from the East, one long-held theory. “But when the evidence goes in the other direction, one must pay attention,” he said.

He said he chose to put his research in a novel and not in a scholarly text because he felt an urgency to share his theory with a wider public. “I could joke that no one reads a book with footnotes and a bibliography,” the author added.

Martin Kemp, an Oxford University art history professor emeritus, co-wrote a 2017 book that identified Leonardo’s mother as Caterina di Meo Lippi, a 15-year-old orphan. He said he continued to favor the theory that the girl who gave birth to the masterpiece painter and inventor was a “rural mother.”



This picture made available on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, by historian Carlo Vecce shows what Vecce says is the original act of liberation of the slave Caterina, who he believes is the mother of Leonardo da Vinci and notarized by Leonardo’s father Piero da Vinci. Vecce says he found it in the State Archives in Florence as described in his latest novel ‘Caterina’s smile’.

## Ling Ma’s ‘Bliss Montage’ wins \$20,000 Story Prize

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Ling Ma’s “Bliss Montage,” a collection which blends the real and the surreal, has won the Story Prize for best short fiction.

Ma will receive \$20,000

for “Bliss Montage,” her first book since her acclaimed debut novel “Severance.”

“Ma melds humor and the surreal beautifully, resulting in a project that is at once absurd and insightful,” prize

judges said in a statement Wednesday night. “This is an expansive, bold, and delightful book.”

The two other finalists, Andrea Barrett for “Natural History” and Morgan Talty

for “Night of the Living Rez,” each will get \$5,000.

The Story Prize was established in 2004, and is underwritten by the Chisholm Foundation. Previous winners include Edwidge Danticat, George Saunders and Lauren Groff.

## Grandmother sniffs at young woman’s nose stud

**DEAR ABBY:** My 20-year-old niece, “Andrea,” came to visit her grandmother wearing a nose stud. Andrea is quiet, is polite to her grandparents and aunt and is in her third year of college. Her grandmother is livid at her daughter for “allowing” the girl to do this. (It appears Andrea may be trying to rebel at this age.) Her grandmother is footing the bill for her college.

Who can help the grandmother to get her granddaughter to stop this behavior, and how? Andrea has never done anything like this before, and this is not like her. Her friends don’t look or act like Goths or punks. This is so out of character. She earns good grades, and she is usually a quiet girl who never speaks to anyone other than her mom or brothers. Please advise.

**TAKEN ABACK IN NEW YORK**

**DEAR TAKEN ABACK:** You keep referring to your niece as a “girl.” Allow me to enlighten you: This “girl” is a young WOMAN. If Granny has a bone to pick with Andrea about her choice of jewelry, she should discuss it with her instead of railing against her fashion choice behind her back. From my perspective, this is a tempest in a teapot. Let it blow over.

■■■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** I have two daughters, ages 29 and 24. Both are married and on their own. Recently, there was an issue be-

tween them. I always try to remain neutral in these situations because I love my girls equally.

The older one is hurt and angry and has every right to feel that way. She doesn’t want to even look at her sister at this point, and I completely understand. (By the way, this has nothing to do with a man; both are happily married.) The younger one is embarrassed and ashamed and doesn’t want to face her sister right now. Again, I understand.

On holidays and special occasions, I always cook a huge meal, and the girls come to my house. How do I handle this? I refuse to cook separate dinners or choose which one I eat my meal with.

**CHALLENGED MOM IN TENNESSEE**

**DEAR MOM:** Tell your younger daughter that regardless of her “embarrassment,” it’s time to offer her sister a sincere apology. Then explain that you have no intention of having holidays and special occasions ruined because of what she did and you want things patched up before those events start happening. Period. After that, proceed as usual and let the girls work things out between themselves.

■■■■■

**TO MY READERS:**

**Happy St. Patrick’s Day:**

May there always be work for your hands to do.

## DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



May your purse always hold a coin or two.  
May the sun always shine on your windowpane.  
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.  
May the hand of a friend always be near you.  
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

**LOVE, ABBY**

■■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)







# Embiid helps 76ers beat Cavs for 6th straight victory



**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Joel Embiid had 36 points and 18 rebounds and played the final 4:12 after initially being called for his sixth foul, leading the Philadelphia 76ers to their sixth straight victory, 118-109 over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Wednesday night.

James Harden added 28 points and Tyrese Maxey had 23 for the Sixers. They were up 108-101 when Embiid was whistled for an offensive charge on Evan Mobley while making a jumper.

As Cleveland fans began to celebrate Embiid's apparent disqualification, Sixers coach Doc Rivers immediately challenged the call, which was overturned after a replay review and the superstar was allowed to stay on the floor.

With Embiid in foul trouble, the Cavs attacked the rim and closed to 110-107 before Maxey drained a 3-pointer and the 76ers made five straight free throws in the final 51 seconds to close it out.

Caris LeVert scored 24 points and Donovan Mitchell added 21 for the Cavs, who were playing the second night of a back-to-back. Cleveland was without center Jarrett Allen, who missed his third straight game with a bruised right eye.

## CLIPPERS 134, WARRIORS 126

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 30 points, Paul George had 24 and Los Angeles overcame Ste-



AP  
Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid (21) shoots against Cleveland Cavaliers forward Evan Mobley during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, March 15, 2023, in Cleveland.

phen Curry's 50-point night to beat Golden State.

The Clippers have won four straight to move into fifth place in the Western Conference. The defending NBA champion Warriors are a game back as the teams split the four-game season series.

Leonard was 10 of 19 from the field for his fourth 30-point effort in the last eight games. He had eight rebounds and five assists.

Curry tied a season high in points with the 12th 50-point game of his career. He was 20 of 28 from the field and had eight 3-pointers. The Warriors have lost nine straight road games.

## ROCKETS 114, LAKERS 110

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Kevin Porter Jr. scored 27 points and Houston beat short-handed Los Angeles.

It's the second straight victory for the Western Conference-worst Rockets, who beat Boston on Monday night.

Already without LeBron James because of an injury, the Lakers were also missing Anthony Davis against Houston. Davis, who had 35 points and 17 rebounds in a win over New Orleans on Tuesday night, isn't playing both games of back-to-back per doctors' orders after coming back from a right foot injury.

Austin Reaves had 24 points off the bench for the Lakers.

## KINGS 117, BULLS 114

**CHICAGO** (AP)—De'Aaron Fox hit a 3-pointer with 0.7 seconds left to lift Sacramento past Chicago.

Fox scored 32 points on 12-for-17 shooting, hitting four 3-pointers.

Domantas Sabonis had his second straight triple-double and 11th of the season—finishing with 14 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists—and Sacramento roared back in the second half with hot 3-point shooting.

Malik Monk had 19 points, going 5 for 8 on 3s as the

Kings overcame a 10-point halftime deficit to win for the fourth time in five and improve to 9-2 in their last 11.

DeMar DeRozan led Chicago with 33 points.

## HEAT 138, GRIZZLIES 119

**MIAMI** (AP)—Bam Adebayo scored 26 points, Tyler Herro added 24 and Miami enjoyed a rare easy victory, beating Memphis.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points, Max Strus had 12, Caleb Martin 11 and Kevin Love and Gabe Vincent each had 10. The Heat set a season high for points.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored

25 for Memphis.

The Grizzlies played their sixth game without star guard Ja Morant, who was given an eight-game suspension by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver earlier Wednesday as the penalty for "conduct detrimental to the league" — in this case, "holding a firearm in an intoxicated state while visiting a Denver area nightclub" and live-streaming it March 4.

## CELTICS 104, TIMBERWOLVES 102

**MINNEAPOLIS** (AP)—Jaylen Brown scored 35 points, Jayson Tatum added 22 and Boston held on to beat Minnesota.

Malcolm Brogdon added 12 points off the bench for Boston, which overcame a tough shooting night to win for the third time in four games.

Anthony Edwards had 28 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota. The Timberwolves have lost three of four.

## MAVERICKS 137, SPURS 128, OT

**SAN ANTONIO** (AP)—Christian Wood had 27 points and 13 rebounds and Dallas overcame a series of blunders at the end regulation to beat San Antonio in overtime without injured All-Stars Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving.

Dwight Powell and Jaden Hardy had 22 points each and Josh Green added 21 points for Dallas, which snapped a three-game skid.

Keldon Johnson had 27 points to lead the short-handed Spurs.

**MIAMI** (AP)—Ja Morant will be back with the Memphis Grizzlies next week, after the NBA handed the All-Star guard an eight-game suspension without pay Wednesday and saying his displaying a firearm at a club in suburban Denver earlier this month was "conduct detrimental to the league."

Morant missed his sixth consecutive game when the Grizzlies played in Miami on Wednesday night. He will miss the next two games — at San Antonio on Friday and home against Golden State on Saturday — then be eligible to return on Monday when Memphis plays Dallas, though he is not expected to play that night.

The games he already missed will count toward the suspension, and Morant will forfeit about \$669,000 in salary.

"Ja's conduct was irresponsible, reckless and potentially very dangerous," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "It also has serious consequences given his enormous following and influence, particularly among young fans

## NBA suspends Ja Morant 8 games for video showing gun in club

who look up to him."

Silver met with Morant in New York before announcing the league's decision. Other league officials, as well as representatives from the National Basketball Players Association, were part of that meeting.

Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said he doesn't expect Morant to play Monday, saying the team is "going to be respectful of the time off he's had."

"There will be a quick ramp-up period after that," Jenkins said. "Obviously, he hasn't been playing basketball for almost two weeks now."

The league's investigation, which started almost immediately after the March 4 incident in which Morant livestreamed himself on Instagram, found that he was "holding a firearm in an intoxicated state" — but did not prove that the gun was owned by Morant "or was displayed by him beyond a brief period."

The league investigation also did not find that Morant had the gun with him on Mem-

phis' flight to Denver, or that he possessed the gun while in any NBA facility. Police in Colorado said last week that they looked into the circumstances surrounding the video and concluded that there was no reason to charge Morant with a crime.

Morant spoke with ESPN for an interview that was to air later Wednesday night, and said the gun was not his.

"He has expressed sincere contrition and remorse for his behavior," Silver said. "Ja has also made it clear to me that he has learned from this incident and that he understands his obligations and responsibility to the Memphis Grizzlies and the broader NBA community extend well beyond his play on the court."

The Grizzlies played at Denver on March 3. At 5:19 a.m. the next day, Morant started a livestream from inside a strip club called Shotgun Willie's in Glendale, Colorado. The video quickly went viral, and trouble escalated.

The Grizzlies initially said

Morant would miss at least two games. Hours later, Morant said in a statement distributed through the agency that represents him that he takes "full responsibility" for his actions and that he was going to "take some time away to get help." ESPN reported that Morant sought counseling at a facility in Florida; Jenkins said Wednesday that "the Florida piece is done for now."

"There's going to be ongoing stuff over the next couple days that he's going to be probably be working on," Jenkins said.

The two-game absence was followed by the team announcing last week that Morant would miss at least four more games, a stretch that concludes Wednesday.

"Now we know the plan moving forward," Jenkins said.

Morant, a two-time All-Star, is averaging 27.1 points and 8.2 assists per game this season for a Memphis team that entered Wednesday in the No. 2 spot in the Western Conference.

This marked at least the sec-

ond time in recent weeks that Morant was the subject of a league investigation. Morant's actions were investigated after a Jan. 29 incident in Memphis that he said led to a friend of his being banned from home games for a year.

That incident followed a game against the Indiana Pacers; citing unnamed sources, The Indianapolis Star and USA Today reported that multiple members of the Pacers saw a red dot pointed at them, and The Athletic reported that a Pacers security guard believed the laser was attached to a gun.

The NBA confirmed that unnamed individuals were banned from the arena but said its investigation found no evidence that anyone was threatened with a weapon.

Morant and a close friend also are involved in a civil lawsuit brought after an incident at Morant's home last summer, in which a 17-year-old alleged that they assaulted him.

"I don't condone any type of violence," Morant said in the

ESPN interview. "But I take full responsibility for my actions. I made a bad mistake and I can see the image that I painted over myself with my recent mistakes. But in the future, I'm going to show everybody who Ja really is, what I'm about and change this narrative."

And when Morant returns, the team knows there will be questions, as well as likely some hostile comments coming in road arenas. The Grizzlies plan to prepare Morant for those moments as best they can.

"We sit down and talk to him and we help guide him through this process," Jenkins said. "That's going to be our focal point, on the court, off the court. Support and accountability, that's what we're focused on, not just in this recent couple of weeks but moving forward. Obviously things are going to be different, but it's going to be great to have him back with the team. The team's going to be able to rally around him as he's been rallying around a difficult situation. We're going to take it one day at a time."



# Mets' Díaz hurts knee as Puerto Rico tops Dominicans in WBC



**MIAMI** (AP)—New York Mets star closer Edwin Díaz injured his right knee celebrating a win Wednesday night that advanced Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic and eliminated the Dominican Republic.

Díaz was taken off the field in a wheelchair in Miami soon after pitching a perfect ninth inning to close out Puerto Rico's 5-2 win over the Dominicans.

The Mets later tweeted that Díaz injured his knee and would undergo further tests Thursday.

The Puerto Rican players were jumping together in the infield when Díaz collapsed to the ground, and he quickly reached for his right leg. Díaz was in tears and did not put any weight on the leg.

Díaz's brother, Cincinnati pitcher Alexis Díaz, was also crying as Edwin was taken away. Mets teammate and Puerto Rico shortstop Fran-

cisco Lindor stood nearby with his hands on his head.

Christian Vázquez homered in a four-run third inning as Puerto Rico advanced to the WBC quarterfinals to face the winner of Pool C on Saturday in Miami.

It's just the second time ever that Dominican Republic didn't make it past the first round (2009).

After Vázquez's solo homer off starter Johnny Cueto, Vimalen Machin, Martin Maldonado, Francisco Lindor and Kiké Hernández hit four straight singles to make it 3-0. MJ Melendez then grounded out on a play that allowed Lindor to score.

Cueto took the loss and was lifted before the end of the third after allowing four hits, three runs and striking out two.

Juan Soto made it 4-1 when he homered to deep center field—448 feet—off Puerto Rico reliever Jovani Moran for his second home run of the tournament.

Soto finished the tournament 6-for-15 with three dou-

bles and three RBIs.

Puerto Rico capped a dominant pool round in which it blanked Israel in a perfect 10-0 win Monday night.

## UNITED STATES 3, COLOMBIA 2

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Mike Trout had three hits and three RBIs, and the United States used a stellar night from its deep bullpen to beat Colombia 3-2 and advance to the quarterfinals.

Mexico and the U.S. both finished with a 3-1 record in Group C to advance. Mexico gets the top seed because it beat the U.S. 11-5 on Sunday.

Trout singled in the third, bringing home Mookie Betts and giving the U.S. a 1-0 lead. Colombia bounced back quickly, taking a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the third on Gio Urshela's sacrifice fly and an RBI double from Reynaldo Rodriguez.

Trout put the Americans ahead again in the fifth with a two-run single that scored Betts and Will Smith.

Merrill Kelly gave up

two runs in three innings for the Americans. Kelly then gave way to a parade of hard throwing bullpen arms: Kendall Graveman, Daniel Bard, David Bednar, Jason Adam, Devin Williams and Ryan Pressly each threw a scoreless inning to finish the win.

Colombia started the tournament with an upset win over Mexico, but then lost three straight to Canada, Britain and the U.S.

A crowd of 29,856 at Chase Field watched the game.

## CUBA 4, AUSTRALIA 3

**TOKYO** (AP)—Cuba earned a 7,500-mile flight to Miami for a trip to the WBC semifinals for the first time since 2006.

Alfredo Despaigne hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly and Yoelkis Guibert followed with a two-run single in three-run fifth inning.

Using current major leaguers for the first time at the WBC, Cuba plays on Sunday in Marlins Park against the winner of a quarterfinal be-

tween Venezuela and the second-place team from Group C: Canada, Colombia, Mexico or the U.S.

Former Philadelphia Phillies prospect Rixon Wingrove, who led Australia with seven RBIs in the tournament, hit a go-ahead RBI single in the second and had a two-run homer in the sixth off the Chicago Cubs' Roenis Elías. Australia got two on later in the sixth before Elías retired Milwaukee Brewers prospect Alex Hall on a flyout.

Elías pitched a perfect seventh, Liván Moinelo worked around a pair of walks in a hitless eighth by striking out Ulrich Bojarski and retiring Tim Kennelly on an inning-ending flyout. Raidel Martínez pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for the save, striking out Darryl George on the eighth pitch of the at-bat for the final out.

Before a crowd of 35,061 at the Tokyo Dome, Luis Robert tied the score for Cuba with a run-scoring groundout in the third.

Cuba, which lost the 2006 final to Japan, had been eliminated in the second round of the previous three WBCs. The Cubans won their third straight game in this tournament after losing their first two.

## MEXICO 10, CANADA 3

**PHOENIX** (AP)—Randy Arozarena had two doubles

and five RBIs, Rowdy Tellez added a two-run single and solo homer, and Mexico pulled away late from Canada to earn a spot in the quarterfinals.

Mexico started the tournament with a surprising loss to Colombia in Group C at Chase Field but rallied with three straight wins, beating the U.S., Britain and Canada.

José Urquidy gave up two runs over four innings, striking out five to earn the win. Arozarena—the 2021 AL Rookie of the Year for the Tampa Bay Rays—hit a bases-clearing double in the sixth that broke the game open, giving Mexico a 6-2 lead.

Canada leadoff hitter Edouard Julien had two hits and an RBI and catcher Bo Naylor hit a solo homer. Rob Zastryzny took the loss after giving up three runs over two innings.

## VENEZUELA 5, ISRAEL 1

**MIAMI** (AP)—Eugenio Suárez homered, singled twice and had three RBIs and starter Jesús Luzardo struck out five in four scoreless innings to lead Venezuela, which already had clinched the Group D title and a quarterfinal berth.

Ronald Acuña Jr. had two singles while Eduardo Escobar also went deep for Venezuela, which finished with 10 hits.

## COLIN

From Page 36

the Final Four of the White Coconut Classic.

Elliott, meanwhile, had bookend championships in the Tan Holdings and White Coconut tournaments plus a runner-up finish in the women's open and won the women's doubles of the SIS tourney to garner 3,000 points.

Serin Chung is 250 points behind her Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 teammate with 2,750 points built on the runner-up finishes to Elliott in the Tan Holdings and White Coconut tourneys and a championship in the singles and second place finish in the SIS tourney.

Hoo Wang is third in the women's open rankings with third place finishes in all three tourneys and a third place finish in the SIS doubles.

Cody Shimizu currently

paces the men's 4.0 with 1,400 points. He got 1,000 points for topping the SIS tourney and 400 points for coming in fifth in the White Coconut.

Taher Shakir is second in the division with 1,275 points. He made the semis of the Tan Holdings Classic, came in fourth in the SIS tourney, and sixth in the White Coconut.

La Hunn Lam and Wataru Kadokura are tied for third with 1,250 points each. The former won both the singles and doubles events of Tan Holdings, while the latter finished third in the Tan Holdings and second in the White Coconut.

Hannah Chae, Irin Chung, Grace Choi, and Savita Sikkell are the Top 4 in the women's 4.0 based solely in their performance in the Tan Holdings Classic where Chae (1,000 points) won the finals against Chung (750

points) and Choi and Sikkell (500 points each) made it to the semis.

In the men's 3.0, Marlon Bercilla leads the list with 1,250 points followed by Dev Bachani and John Kennenth Casauran with 1,100 and 875 points, respectively.

Seiyul Hong, Mimi Culp, and Stephanie Kim are 1-2-3 in the women's 3.0 with 250 points, 200 points, and 150 points, respectively.

Michelle Park leads the women's 2.0 with the 1,000 points she got from the Tan Holdings Classic. Jalexia Rulona is second with 750 points following her runner-up finish to Park, while La Mee Lam and Jocelyn Paano both have 500 points for reaching the semis of the season-opening tourney.

In the men's 4.0, Paul Jang is No. 1 with 1,000 points after winning both the Tan Holdings Classic and White Coconut Classic. Eric Abragan

and John Bradley are tied at second with 750 points after runner-up finishes to Jang in the Tan Holdings and White Coconut, respectively.

Dong Min Lee currently rules the roost in the men's 5.0 with 325 points. National coach and Sports Hall of Fame inductee Jeff Race, Ronnie Lacbayo, and Roy Pangelinan are all tied at second with 250 points each.

Lydia Tan, Eunkyoung Lee, and Annie Lai are the Top 3 in the women's 5.0 with 250 points, 200 points, and 150 points, respectively, across their names.

David Lai is the top 60-and-over player after winning the Tan Holdings Classic for 1,000 points. Felix Rulona is second with 938 points, while John Bradley is third with 625 points.

The rankings for the CNMI junior tennis players will be published next week in the *Saipan Tribune*.

## JERRY

From Page 36

way to high school. And I just want to say thank you to all the 19 sports federations that are here. NMSA is the governing body, but what you see is really not NMSA's work—it is the national federations' work from every sport."

"Nine sports got to compete in the Mini Games and there's others that may have the opportunity to compete in the upcoming Micronesian Games in July, and the Pacific Games in November... and that's why we

want to recognize your federations because preparation is not easy. We want you to know that we recognize your efforts across all sports, for all the local competitions, as well as the regional competitions," said Tan.

In June, the women's and men's NMI National Basketball Team competed in the FIBA Micronesian Cup in Guam; NMI Athletic's Team competed in the Oceania Athletics Championship in Australia; the NMI Junior National Tennis Team competed in the North Pacific Regional Championships in Guam; the NMI Nation-

al Swim Team competed in the 16th FINA World Championships in Budapest Hungary.

In July, the NMI Junior National Tennis Team represented the North Pacific in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji; and Zarinae Sapong competed in the 2022 World Athletics Championship in Oregon.

September saw the return of the NMI U20 National Soccer Team at the Asian Football Confederation U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, and the NMI National Swim Team were at it again at the FINA Junior

World Championships—this time in Peru.

October saw the NMI U15 National Basketball teams at the FIBA U15 Oceania Championships in Guam; the NMI U17 Men's National Soccer Team competed in the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Australia; and Denise Myers competed at the 2022 Oceania Cross Country Championships in Guam.

Myers was back at it again this time in Fiji for the 2022 Oceania Triathlon Pacific Island Championship in December; the NMI Cycling Team competed in the Oceania Cycling Confederation

Pacific Cup in Guam; and the NMI National Swim Team competed in the 19th FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia.

This year in February, the NMI U15 National Badminton Team competed in the Pacific U15 Invitational Team Challenge in New Zealand, while the NMI Men's and Women's National Badminton Team competed in the Victor Oceania Championships also in New Zealand; Tania Tan and Sil-drey Veloria competed in the World Cross Country Championship in Australia; and the NMI Weightlift-

ing Team competed in the Guam Olympic Weightlifting Competition.

And just last week, the NMI Women's U20 National Soccer Team took on the AFC U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Palestine.

The banquet awarded the 2022 Male Athlete of the Year and Female Athlete of the Year, Student Athletes of the Year, the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame inductee, Teams of the Year, Administrators of the Year, Coaches of the Year, and Athletes and Teams of the Month for the respective months in 2022.



# Triple J Motors offers Hyundai IONIC 5, Mitsubishi Outlander



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Triple J Motors Saipan recently announced that it will be offering a brand new 2023 Hyundai IONIC 5 SEL with Navigation and AWD and a brand new 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander as hole-in-one prizes for NMC Foundation's Golf Open on March 18 and 19, 2023. In photo with NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero is Triple J Motors general manager Sean Ficke and Triple J Motors staff.

To help add more excitement to the Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming Golf Open, Triple J Motors has announced that it will be offering a brand new 2023 Hyundai IONIC 5 SEL with Navigation and AWD and a brand new 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander as hole-in-one prizes.

"We're thrilled to support the Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming golf open by offering the IONIC and Outlander as prizes," Triple J Motors general manager Sean Ficke said. "All of us here at Triple J Motors believe in giving back to

the community and supporting education. We hope this donation will help raise funds for the Foundation's programs and initiatives, and we look forward to seeing the winners drive away in their new cars."

For the first time, NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on March 18 and 19, 2023, on the east and west courses of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort. The tournament fee for the 2023 golf open is \$250. First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies flights (low gross and low

net) will each receive \$500. Second place finishers will receive \$300 and third place finishers will receive \$200.

"We are extremely grateful to Triple J Motors for their generous offer of two brand new cars for our upcoming golf open," NMC Foundation chair Ben Babauta said. "We cannot thank Triple J Motors enough for their commitment to education and their investment in the future of our community."

This year's tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes,

such as a brand new 2023 Toyota 4Runner SR5 from Atkins Kroll Saipan, a brand new 2023 Nissan Rogue from Joten Motors, a \$10,000 shopping spree at Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, \$10,000 from Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc., \$5,000 from Pacific Insurance, \$3,000 from McDonald's of Saipan, and a YETI cooler from Boardline.

The tournament, which is the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds for the college for its rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. Despite the devastation and destruction of super typhoon Soudelor and Yutu,

the college has been aggressively seeking funds from all available sources to rebuild classrooms, offices, labs, and workforce spaces for the

CNMI community. The Foundation is seeking the CNMI private sector's support through fundraising events like the golf tournament.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the College with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf) or by contacting NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at [carla.sablan@marianas.edu](mailto:carla.sablan@marianas.edu) or (670) 237-6780.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf). Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit [www.marianas.edu](http://www.marianas.edu). (PR)

## 40 boats expected for mahi derby



MARK RABAGO

*Salty Bandits 2* captain Austin Benavente and a crew member pose with Saipan Fishermen Association members during the awards ceremony for the 18th Annual Mahi-Mahi Fishing Derby last May.

By MARK RABAGO  
[mark\\_rabago@saipantribune.com](mailto:mark_rabago@saipantribune.com)  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Saipan Fishermen's Association is expecting 40 boats to take part in the 19th Annual Mahi Fishing Derby set for March 25 off the waters of the Marianas.

"We are expecting 40 boats, mainly from Saipan and a few from Tinian. Huge thank you to Marpac and Budweiser and Tan Holdings, both celebrating 50 years of business

and community contributions to the CNMI. They both have been great partners of the SFA in supporting our events," said SFA president Tony Scragg.

The crew who lands the mightiest mahi takes home \$2,500, while second and third place pockets \$1,500 and \$1,000, respectively. Fourth and fifth places get in-kind prizes,

Scragg reminded boat crews that registration is at

4pm, Friday, March 24, at the Smiling Cove Marina, where there will also be a briefing on the event and rules.

"As a reminder to the participants, we highly encourage boat owners to have up-to-date registration and safety requirements. If they are in need of having this done they can contact DPS Boating Safety located at Smiling Cove Marina," he said.

The registration fee is \$100 per boat, including one captain and one angler, and \$25 for each additional angler.

Last year, *Salty Bandits 2* topped the tournament after netting a monster mahi weighing 21.1 lbs. Second place went to *Sweet Candy* and their 19.2-lb catch, while third place was the 18.1-pounder caught by *J3RM*.

For more information about the 19th Annual Mahi Fishing Derby, call Scragg at (670) 483-4597.



## 3rd Annual Women's 10K run tomorrow



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 is tomorrow, March 18, starting at 6am. Above shows some participants of the 2022 race pose for a group photo.

By LEIGH GASES  
[leigh\\_gases@saipantribune.com](mailto:leigh_gases@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER



In celebration of Women's Month in the Marianas and International Women's Day 2023, the Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 is set for tomorrow, March 18, starting at 6am.

The course will run through the Saipan Marathon course with the start and finish line at the Hyatt Regency

Saipan parking lot in front of Club Elan.

In addition to the 10K run, there is also the new mixed female/male 5K Fun Run/Walk, along with a new distance of a women's only 5K.

NMA general secretary Robin Sapong advises "motorists/the general public to be extra cautious while driving and apologies in advance for any inconvenience. We thank the community for their continuous support."

The OneTime chip timing system will be used for this event.

Race bib and shoe tag pick up is today, Friday, from 4:45pm to 6:45pm at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field and on race day at the start/finish line.

Sponsors, donors, and partners of the event are Marpac Michelob Ultra, Run Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Triple J Inc. Saipan, IT&E, and volunteers.

There are currently 60 registered. If you'd like to join, click the link

<https://raceroster.com/events/2023/69846/nmi-10km-womens-run/>

Dr. Lily Muldoon, medical director of the Division of Public Health at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., won gold in both the inaugural and 2nd Annual NMI Women's 10K Run.

In the first year, she crossed the finish line with a time of 43:42 and in the second year, crossed it at 43:49. Second to her in the 2022 race was Akiko Miller with 45:03 and Dixie Mendenhall with 48:33 finishing third.





Embiid helps 76ers  
beat Cavs for 6th  
straight victory

PAGE 33

# Saipan Tribune Sports

Triple J Motors  
offers Hyundai  
IONIC 5, Mitsubishi  
Outlander

PAGE 35



36 FRIDAY MARCH 17, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Colin, Hyejin atop tennis rankings



Ramsey

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As expected, Colin Ramsey and Hyejin Elliott are No. 1 in the men's and women's open rankings of the 2022-2023 Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

Ramsey, so far, has accumulated 3,000 points for winning the men's open singles of the Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament, and the White Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament. Each of those wins gave him 1,000 points.

Tomas Abel is second in the men's open rankings with 1,850 points. He made the semifinals of the Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, second in the SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament, and again made a Final Four appearance in the

White Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament. Abel received 750 points for the runner-up finish in the Tan Holdings tourney and 500 points apiece for making it to the semis of the two latter competitions.

Up-and-coming netter David Kwon completed the Top 3 in the men's open rankings with 1,600 points. He made it to the quarterfinals of the Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, the semis of the SIS men's open singles and quarters of the doubles, and advanced to

See COLIN on Page 34



Elliott

## Jerry Tan praises CNMI athletes



March 7, 2023  
Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan makes his remarks where he praised CNMI athletes and sports federations during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last March 7 at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

By LEIGH GASES  
leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan not only acknowledged and praised the athletes who made the CNMI proud during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, but also commended the athletes who have represented their islands

and competed abroad.

During the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last March 7 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Tan gave his remarks before awards were presented to the top athletes and sports organizations.

In a slideshow presentation, nine countries that CNMI athletes have traveled to and

competed in from June 2022 to March 2023 were shown: Guam, Australia, Fiji, Hungary, U.S., Jordan, Palestine, New Zealand, and Peru. Wimbledon in the U.K. wasn't in the slideshow but it was mentioned by tennis coach Jeff Race—which Tan acknowledged.

Along with the countries were the 19 tournaments in

which CNMI athletes participated from the nine sports of athletics, badminton, basketball, cycling, soccer, swimming, tennis, triathlon, and weightlifting.

Tan said, "it's pretty cool to see that these are the countries

that some of you competed in. When I see this list, I get emotional because we live on a small island and have the opportunity to be able to represent Team NMI. Many of the athletes are the youth—they are still in high school—and have already had the opportunity to represent the NMI, to carry

our flag and compete in their respective sports."

He added, "We promote sports. We want everyone to continue playing and also encourage more youth to come out. That's why the interscholastic program is very important. They start in elementary all the

See JERRY on Page 34



## Ultramarathoner needs your soles

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It turns out, Run Saipan member Ronald Villafria needs your soles or donation of running shoes after all as he continues his ultramarathon career in his native Philippines.

After running the TCS Clark Animo International Marathon and the Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM Midnight Ultramarathon the past month, the 52-year-old longtime Saipan resident is now down to his last two pairs of shoes—one relatively new and the other a raggedy recently stitched pair he just uses for training.

"Before my last race, my other pair actually gave out and I had to go to the shoe

repair shop to have it fixed. It's still good for training but is a no-go for actual races," he said in Filipino.

Villafria said help is on the way though as his wife, Lorna, is coming home for vacation next month and will bring one of his better pair of running shoes that he left on Saipan.

In the meantime, he's asking those who have slightly used running shoes that they want to part with or those who want to outright donate new running shoes, to contact Lorna at (670) 285-2293 before she leaves for Manila next month. Villafria is requesting size 10 running



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Run Saipan member Ronald Villafria shows his raggedy training shoes after back-to-back runs encompassing 70 kilometers.

shoes of any make.

"I just want to thank everyone who will be willing to donate slightly used or

See ULTRAMARATHONER on Page 34